



Welcome!

We are excited to have you as part of the Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event, April 23 - 26, 2026. It takes all of us working together to pull off an event of this magnitude.

As volunteers, our mission is to deliver a world-class experience for our spectators and athletes. This manual will provide you with some information for your role as a volunteer.

Thank you for your commitment, passion and enthusiasm for the 2026 Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event. We hope you enjoy every moment, meet new people and build new memories that last a lifetime.

Sincerely,

Laura Voll
Volunteer Coordinator
Equestrian Events, Inc.



PRESENTED BY MARS Equestrian™





History

Equestrian Events, Inc. is a non-profit Kentucky corporation formed in 1975 initially to stage the 1978 World Three-Day Event Championships at the then brand-new Kentucky Horse Park, in Lexington, Ky. In October 1976, as preparation for the World Championships, EEI organized the first horse trials ever held at the Horse Park. In 1977, the organization coordinated the staging of the National Pony Club Rally in August and produced the North American Junior Three-Day Event Championships in September.

EEI went on to organize the 1978 World Three-Day Event Championships, held for the first time in the United States, which were an unprecedented success. Shortly after the conclusion of the World Championships, the American Horse Shows Association asked EEI to host the first major three-day event of the new year, setting the wheels in motion for the 1979 Kentucky Horse Trials and similar events thereafter.

Mission Statement

Equestrian Events, Incorporated is a non-profit, charitable organization that supports the development of riders and horses in one or more of the sports recognized by the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI). Through the staging of an annual event at the highest level, EEI seeks to ensure the competitiveness of the United States in international competition, and to enhance the equine industry worldwide.

Event Dates

April 23 - 26, 2026 | Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event CCI 4*-S and CCI 5*-L

April 23 - 26, 2026 | Kentucky International Grand Prix Show Jumping CSI5*

Volunteer Sign-up

- All volunteers must sign up in the VIP system. [Eventingvolunteers.com](https://eventingvolunteers.com).
- The USEF and USEA joint waiver are part of Eventing Volunteers and can be tracked and signed through the system.
- EEI's liability statement can be viewed online at [EEI Liability Statement](#). By volunteering for the K3DE you are agreeing to these terms.
- As a volunteer you are agreeing to the [Volunteer Social Media Policy](#).



The Volunteer Experience

Volunteer Assignment

There are competition volunteers and non-competition volunteers, each of which plays an integral part in the event. Competition volunteers will have a Chief Steward to whom they will report. The Chief Steward will relay information as far as trainings/briefings, position, where to meet, etc.

Non-competition volunteers will have a Team Leader or Committee Chair who will be in contact with you to let you know your meeting location and go over training. Please know the place and name of the person to whom you are supposed to report. The staff in the Volunteer Lounge can help direct you when you arrive.

Arriving at the Kentucky Horse Park and Check-In

There is a designated parking area for volunteers by the Alltech Arena. You will need to have a W Parking Permit to reach this area. Please refer to the map. There are shuttles that will take you to the Volunteer Tent or to another location at the Horse Park. Allow time to enter the Kentucky Horse Park, park, check in, and walk or take a shuttle to your location. Your Chief Steward or Team Leader will provide you specific instructions for assigned areas.

Credentials

A valid ticket is required to access the Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event. Depending on where you volunteer, additional credentials may be required for your work area and must be worn while you work your shift. Some volunteers are required to wear a uniform during your volunteer shift.

Volunteers are entitled to a ticket to watch the Dressage phase in the Rolex Arena. Tickets may be picked up at the Information Booth at the Rolex Arena or the Volunteer Lounge.

If your volunteer ticket or credentials are lost or stolen, please contact your Team Leader.

Volunteer Goal ...

... to provide a positive experience for everyone who attends the event. As a volunteer, you are important to the success of this event. Your actions impact the experience for the spectators, athletes, officials and other volunteers.



Volunteer Code of Conduct

- Be polite and courteous.
- Be on time for your shift.
- Neither solicit nor accept gratuities or other benefits.
- Possession or use of drugs and/or illegal substances is not allowed at any time.
- Consumption of alcohol or any controlled substance is not allowed while on duty.
- Smoking is not allowed while on duty.
- Personal cell phone usage while on your shift is not permitted. Please limit the number of selfies and refrain from texting while on duty.
- Inappropriate behavior or negative attitude that affects others is not tolerated.
- Do not use your volunteer status to obtain autographs or pictures with the athletes. There are autograph sessions in Sponsor Village throughout the event.
- Identify first aid locations and safe areas.
- Identify possible hazards and report those to your supervisor.
- All requests from the media for comments or information should be politely refused and directed to the Media Center or your Team Leader.

Confidentiality

You may hear something while volunteering. Please maintain confidentiality. Do not relay the personal information of any other volunteer, spectator or athlete. Blogging and social media posts are acceptable forms of personal expression provided it is in good taste and confined to your personal experiences. Please do not relay any confidential information or attempt to speak on behalf of the organizations involved with the event. Remember that you may have access to areas of the event where regular spectators are prohibited. You should not be posting on social media from these areas. The complete Social Media Policy is available at <https://www.eventingvolunteers.com/documents/332>.

Environment

Please maintain a volunteer environment free of harassment and discrimination. Everyone wants to be treated fairly. Respect and good communication skills are important.

Feedback

We value your feedback, both compliments and opportunities for improvement. There are two ways to provide feedback. First, when at the event, bring any items of concern to your Chief/Team Leader immediately. After the event you will receive a survey where feedback can be given. We can only improve with your help!



Arrival and Parking

Recommended Driving Route to Park: Our security team recommends that you travel to the Main entrance via Newtown Pike and Iron Works Parkway. Proceed to Exit 115 (Newtown Pike) off I-75 and turn north onto Newtown Pike. At the four-way stop, turn left (west) onto Iron Works Parkway. Then turn right into the Main entrance of the Kentucky Horse Park.

Event Entry: Be sure to have your volunteer ticket and parking pass every day starting Thursday, April 28. Tickets will be scanned and everyone over 12 years old must have a ticket for entry.

Volunteer Amenities

Volunteer Admission Ticket: Provides admission all four days for those in a volunteer position. Everyone MUST have a ticket and they will be scanned. The same ticket is valid for all four days and will be scanned each day. Children 12 and under are admitted at no charge when accompanied by an adult with ticket.

Worker Parking Hangtag: Volunteer Parking will be behind the ALLTECH ARENA. Enter via the Main Kentucky Horse Park Entrance, take the 2nd right on the roundabout and follow Cigar Lane to Alltech Way and turn left. There will be signs along with parking attendants to direct you.

ID Badge: The credential will indicate your name, group and access. Non-competition volunteers may not receive a credential badge.

Hilltop Bio Volunteer Lounge: We are pleased to be able to provide a lounge on the show grounds for volunteers to take a break, grab a light snack and watch the live feed. You may be asked show your volunteer ticket to enter the tent. The Volunteer Lounge is located on Nina Bonnie just below the Claiborne Ring and across from the Trade Fair. Please acknowledge the generous donation of Hilltop Bio who made this possible. <https://hilltopbio.com/>

Event Shirt: Sponsored by Chewy, this one-of-a-kind shirt will be given to you by your Chief Steward or Team Leader. Unless your team has another uniform, please wear this shirt with khaki pants, jeans or other long pants while volunteering. If a long-sleeved shirt is needed, please wear white or black underneath the Event shirt. Always dress for the weather!



Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event Hat: Given by the Title Sponsor, Defender, to all Kentucky Three-Day Event Volunteers. Enjoy this generous gift and wear it proudly!

Lunch Ticket: Depending on your area and hours volunteering, your Chief Steward/Team Leader may provide a yellow lunch voucher. Lunch vouchers are valued at \$12 and they may be used at food vendors at the event. No change is given if you don't use the entire \$12.

Box Lunches: On Cross-Country Day and for those volunteers who have opted for them, there will be a crew bringing lunches out to workers who won't be able to come in from the course. If you have special dietary requirements, it is suggested that you bring a cooler or lunch bag with your own food.

There will be a break between the CCI4* and the CCI5* cross-country and a lot of that time will be spent placing volunteers in their positions.

Rolex Stadium Seating: Volunteers are eligible for complimentary Dressage tickets. Simply show your volunteer ticket or ID badge at the Information Stand in the Rolex Stadium or at the Hilltop Bio Volunteer Lounge. CSI 5* Grand Prix and Sunday Show Jumping seats are available for purchase online at <https://kentuckythreedayevent.com/tickets/>.

Sponsor Gifts and Discounts: Many of our generous sponsors offer gifts and/or discounts to volunteers. Watch your email for the Volunteer Newsletter that will list the sponsor offers. The Volunteer Lounge will distribute the gifts.

Raffle Items: Various raffle items are donated for the volunteers by our Sponsors. Volunteers will be chosen at random from the VIP volunteer sign-up to receive raffle items. Once notified, volunteers can pick up their prizes at the Volunteer Lounge.



Volunteer Apparel

- Wear your volunteer t-shirt or uniform when working.



- Dress appropriately for the weather (it's April in Kentucky ...) and consider your footwear!



- When volunteering, dress in a respectful manner





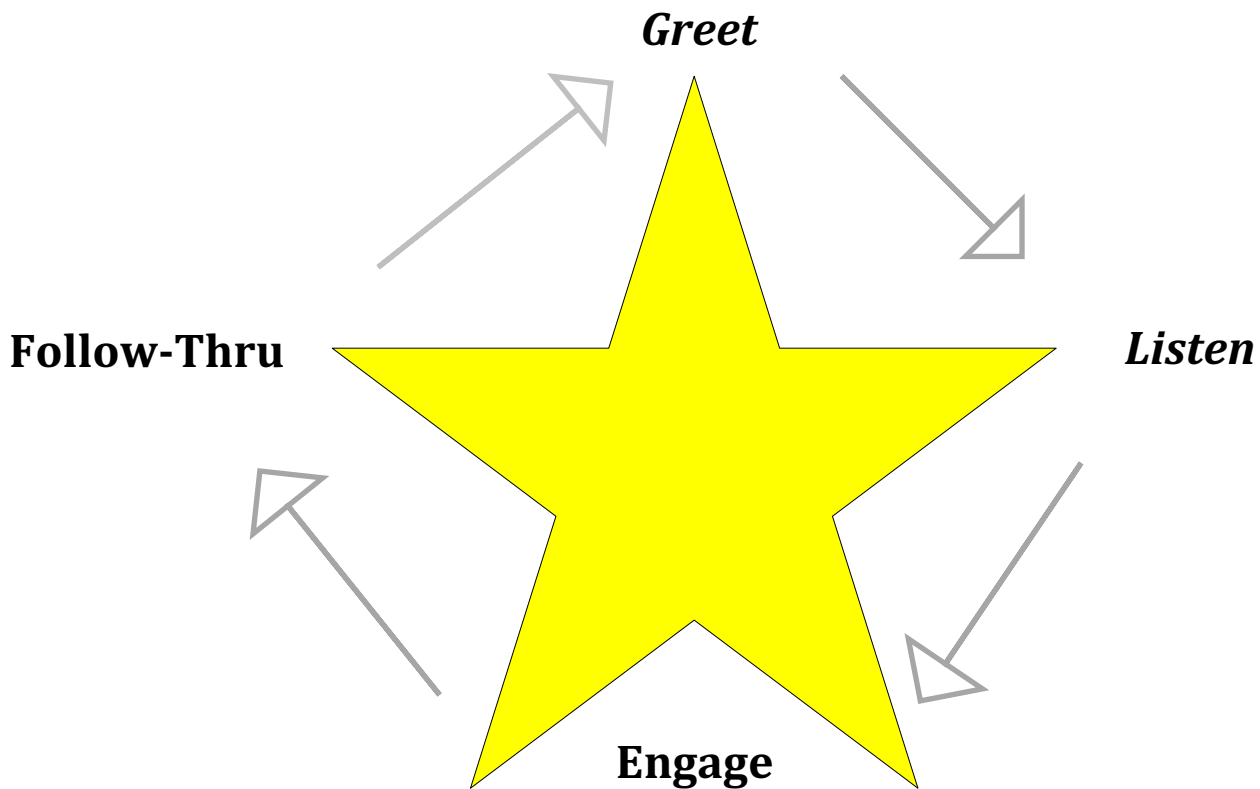
5-Star Customer Service Model

Many volunteers will interact with spectators. The 5-Star Customer Service process outlined in this manual is designed to help you become familiar with the event and help you exhibit a high standard of customer service when dealing with people regardless of their cultural background.

As a volunteer the **service you provide is a crucial link to the success of the Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event.** In many cases you (the volunteer) are the face of the Kentucky Three-Day Event.

How can you accomplish this?

The expectation is that you will practice the following ***5-star service model*** when working to help spectators and competitors during the event.



REPEAT, REPEAT, REPEAT!!!!



★ **Greet – A few helpful tips!**

- *Smiling is proven to make you more approachable and in general have a more pleasant tone to your voice: **Smiling** should be the first impression that every competitor or spectator sees with each volunteer.*
- *If the situation warrants, **introduce yourself!** People connect with people so if they can put a face to a name that can automatically place positivity into the beginning of your conversation.*
- *Be careful with your **tone and your body language**. Always face toward the person you are working with, make eye contact, don't cross your arms and in general provide a welcoming demeanor.*

★ **Listen – A few helpful tips!**

- Allow the competitor or spectator to fully explain their question or situation **without interruption** from you.
- **Acknowledgement** that you are listening to what they are saying is key. Using non-verbal head nods and/or verbal queues like “I see”, “Ok, yes”, “MmmHm” are just a few you can use so they know you are following them and not pretending to listen.
- After they have finished telling you what they may need your help with, if it is complex, **paraphrasing is always helpful** to make sure you and the individual are on the same page and you are not assuming something incorrectly. This also helps demonstrate to them that you are there to help them and you did LISTEN to what they said to you. For example, if you are working at the Three-Day Shop and a customer asks you about availability of a T-shirt you could say, “Ok, so just to make sure I know what you need, you are looking for 3 extra small, white T-shirts for your nieces to bring back home that you can't find out on the floor, right? “

★ **Engage – A few helpful tips!**

- **Ask thoughtful questions that cause you to connect** with a spectator or exhibitor. For example, “Is this your first Kentucky Three-Day Event?”, “Where are you from?”, “What are you most looking forward to during your Kentucky trip?” These kinds of questions can be used at the beginning of a conversation if you happen to be approaching them to offer help or they can be used as a filler if you are waiting on something to provide them a solution.
- **Don't wait for them to approach you.** If you see someone that looks a little lost, don't hesitate to approach them to say, “I am a volunteer here at the event, did you need help with something?”
- Make them feel like they are being **helped by a friend**. For example, if you are giving them a ride on a golf cart or showing them to their seat in the stadium say, “Is there any rider/horse you are excited to see today?” or “What brings you to the Kentucky Three-Day Event?” or “If you are looking for an awesome place to eat in town, I would try_____”. It doesn't always have to be about the actual event to create the connection.



- Engaging and listening go hand in hand so don't be afraid to ask them questions and probe about things that you hear them say when you are listening to their initial question. Of course, address the initial concern first, but then go back to another point they may have mentioned and **ask more questions about it**. You never know what kind of help you can provide!

★ **Follow-Through – A few helpful tips!**

- Don't commit to something that you can't do in the timeframe that you give. The volunteer motto should be to **"Under promise and over deliver."** By no means do we want to tell people we can't help them (if you don't know the answer or how to help, you should find someone that does), but we need to be realistic and set the correct expectations with those we are helping.
- If you tell someone you will be back with them in a moment, **don't forget to go back** and help them or find an answer for them. People remember the negative experience and the lack of follow-up or follow-through is a key negative contributor to someone's experience.
- Even if you left a spectator or competitor with a solution, **be as proactive as you can** and follow-up with them (if possible), especially when they are not expecting a further follow-up. It shows you care and are there for them!

★ **Repeat, Repeat, Repeat!**

- *It isn't enough just to provide exceptional service to 60% of the people that you interact with each day of the event, the goal is 100% of those individuals will feel as though they were the only person you helped that day and come away with a positive experience!*

A few other items on service...

- If you see a fellow volunteer really going above and beyond, give them a HIGH FIVE! Recognition from a peer can be empowering for both the individual receiving as well as the individual giving.
- These service expectations can be beneficial not only to the experience of those that you help at the event but you can use these tools in your personal and professional lives. This event allows for good practice, make these days count!





FAQs

Many answers can be found on the Event website or mobile app.

Directional Questions

Q: How do I get to Dressage?

A: Dressage is located in the Johnson Arena at Rolex Stadium, the large building with the green roof behind the lake.

Q: Where can I find the start, finish and vet box on the Cross-Country Course?

A: The start and the finish of the Cross-Country Course are located off Cigar Lane west of stabling. The Alltech Arena will be on the left and the course will be across the way on the right.

Q: Where is the Walnut Ring?

A: The Walnut Ring is behind Sponsor Village past the tents, in front of Nina Bonnie Blvd.

Q: Where is the Trade Fair?

A: The Trade Fair is in the covered arena and is open from 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Thursday and Friday, Saturday 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. on Sunday.

Competition Questions

Q: Can we walk the Cross-Country Course?

A: Yes, walking the Cross-Country Course is allowed. However, we ask that spectators stay behind the ropes and only cross at designated crossover points. During the Cross-Country phase on Saturday, listen for the whistle, which signals you to stop.

Q: Do I need a ticket to watch the event?

A: Most events held in the Rolex Stadium will require a ticket to view. This includes reserved seats for Thursday and Friday's Dressage portions as well as for the CSI 5* Grand Prix, and Show Jumping on Sunday. Reserved seats for these events will need to be purchased in addition to the Grounds Admission passes.

Q: Where and when is the Horse Inspection?

A: Horse Inspection times are Wednesday at 2 p.m. and Sunday at 7:30 a.m. These are also listed on the Schedule of Events located on the back of the Event Facility map. Horse Inspections will be held down the path between the medical services and the disabled services shuttle stop.



- Q: How many competitors will compete?
A: A list of competitors and their ride times is on the Orders-of-Go, available at all Event Information Booths, as well as the website and mobile app.
- Q: Where can I get a Results sheet?
A: Results are updated live on the website and mobile app.

Program Questions

- Q: What information can be found in the Official Program?
A: The Official Program is your go-to resource for the event. It includes:
- Event Map
 - Cross-Country Map and Fences
 - Sponsor and Trade Fair Map
 - Food Locations (on map)
 - Shuttle Stops (on map)
 - Tailgate Locations (on map)
- Q: Where can I purchase an Official Event Program?
A: Programs are available at the main entrances and will also be available for \$15.00 at various information booths distributed throughout the park.
- Q: Is there a map of the course available for purchase?
A: There is a tear-out map in the center of the Official Event Program and a Spectator Map available at information stands.

Ticketing Questions

- Q: Can I purchase tickets for today, tomorrow, etc., and if so where?
A: Tickets may be purchased online or at the Event Box Offices located at any of the event entrances and in Rolex Stadium.

Transportation Questions

- Q: Where does the spectator / disabled shuttle pickup/drop off?
A: The shuttle will have various pick-up and drop-off stopping locations. These locations are listed on the Event Facility Map with an available legend to establish designated areas. In general, the route goes along Nina Bonnie from the Alltech Arena to the Rolex Stadium.



Q: Where do shuttles run and at what times?

A: Shuttle pick-up spots are located up and down Nina Bonnie Blvd to the Alltech Arena and arrive every few minutes depending on the events that are occurring at that time.

Miscellaneous Questions

Q: Is there an ATM and if so, where is it located?

A: ATMs are located at the Three-Day Shop in Sponsor Village, Trade Fair, and Rolex Stadium.

Q: I've locked my keys in my car; is there someone who can help me?

A: We recommend that you contact the State Police.

Q: Can I get a taxi/Uber?

A: Yes, taxis/Uber are allowed to pick up passengers at the National Horse Center in front of the Pony Club building.

Q: Where do I get tickets to the Kentucky Horse Park?

A: Tickets for the Kentucky Horse Park are included in your admission ticket for the Event. The Visitors Information Center is open for questions related to the Park.

Q: When is next year's event and how do I order tickets in advance?

A: In 2027, the Defender Kentucky Three-Day Event will take place from April 22-25. Tickets will be available immediately after the 2026 event and will go on sale officially on October 10, 2026.

Q: I am here as a Sponsor's guest. Where is the Sponsor Tent?

A: The Sponsor Tent is called The Chalet on Rolex Way, located on the west side of Rolex Stadium near the statue of Bruce Davidson.

Q: I am an Owner; where are my passes?

A: If you requested an Owner's Packet, your passes will be in the Stable Office. If you have not requested anything, the Stable Office can help you. It is located off Nina Bonnie Blvd near barns 8-12.

Q: My companion is disabled. How does he/she get to use a golf cart?

A: Golf carts are not available for rent. However, Spectator and Disabled shuttles are available throughout the park.



Q: Can I buy a ticket for my dog, so I can take him/her into the stands?

A: While dogs on a leash are permitted on the Horse Park grounds, they are not permitted in the stands unless they are required for a disability. The Lexington Humane Society will have a station set up near the Campground entrance to the event where your dog will be looked after. A donation is requested that is appropriate for the time your dog is lodged. There will be no special parking concessions for vehicles containing dogs and distressed dogs will be removed from vehicles, through whatever means necessary, by Animal Control and/or Event Security.

Q: Where can I check Lost and Found?

A: Lost and Found is located in the Information Stand at Rolex Stadium. This stand is the one nearest to the Bruce Davidson statue.

Q: Where can I receive medical assistance?

A: The Medical Services Tent is located along Nina Bonnie Boulevard across from the Trade Fair on Lee Cholack Drive.