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<https://www.furryweekend.com/2025/05/introducing-a-virtual-queue-system-for-fwa2025/>

The Virtual Queue System

Hi, folks. This document covers the whats, whys, and hows of the Virtual Queue system that we're implementing at FWA this year. But before we get there: we apologize for starting out with a too-bare-bones description of our new Virtual Queue system, and that our announcement of this new system is coming to you so late. We hope this doc answers all the reasonable questions that you raised when reading our first draft, and if it doesn't, [we'll be around to answer any that remain.](#)

First: Why?

In 2024, FWA was already an unprecedented size, and it was bursting at the seams. When planning the space, we allocated as much room as was physically possible for lines, and the lines for some events *still* exceeded that. Waiting in an extremely long line isn't just inconvenient and uncomfortable, it can be dangerous if there's an emergency, and the longer the lines got, the more the risk grew.

Now, in 2025, FWA is expected to grow in attendance again. That forced the following choice. Do we:

- Try to keep the same queueing system and leave attendee safety to chance
- Find new places for people to line up (meaning: out on the sidewalk, in the sun and rain)
- Investigate a new solution: **virtual queues**.

We looked into all three, but frankly, only one of those options stood a chance of making the con better. Done correctly, virtual queues make it easier to schedule your con, and let you spend less time waiting in lines and more time hanging out with your friends – while still being able to go to the places and see the things that you want to.

That's why we're piloting the virtual queue system this year. It won't be perfect, but we honestly believe it will be better. And if it isn't, we'll make changes until we find something that is.

Second: How The Virtual Queue System Works

1. Pre-booking:

The easiest way to attend an event is pre-booking an appointment. It's as easy as:

- a. Sign up for a time

- b. Allow our security to verify your appointment
- c. Walk right in

You can do this once (for an individual event) or once per day (for multi-day offerings like Vendor Hall and Artist Alley). You can show up a few minutes early, or up to 10 minutes after your scheduled time has passed.

2. Digital line (waitlist):

If there aren't any pre-booking appointments left, you have to wait in line. Except, instead of a *physical* line, you join the *digital* line. It works just like any other line: first come, first served. It's just as easy:

- a. Join the digital line
- b. Receive a text that it's your turn
- c. Arrive within 45 minutes to be let in

Just like a physical line, you can enter and exit the digital line as much as you want, including multiple times per day.

That's it! A new way to do lines that allows you to wander around con spaces and hang out with your friends while waiting, plus a pre-booking system that lets you guarantee a time once a day. With both methods, there's no "end time"; you can stay as long as you want.

Common Questions

Q: What if I have to go to the bathroom?

If you need to step out of a virtual queue space for a short period for any reason (bathroom, headless lounge, etc), speak to the security person at the exit. They'll give you a lanyard, which you can use to re-enter within the next 45 minutes. If you need to leave for a longer period, you can rejoin the digital line as usual. Due to its unique operational challenges (and because it contains bathrooms and a headless lounge), this does not include the Moonlight Festival.

Q: I have accessibility needs – will the virtual queue work for me?

Accessibility was a primary focus as we developed this system. We actually hope that virtual queues are *better* than the old system in many cases, because they alleviate having to stand and wait for long periods.

If you need an individual with you to support you, you can pre-book appointments at the same time, or join the digital line at the same time.

We hope that these features, plus the ability to step out of the space for a short period and return, will be sufficient to handle many accessibility needs.

If these don't cover your specific circumstance or you have other questions, our accessibility team would be happy to hear from you. Please visit them at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis on the International level.

Q: Will there be a physical line I can wait in instead?

No, the digital line completely replaces the main physical lines from previous years. There may be a very short line to verify appointments, if many people with the same appointment time arrive at once.

Q: What if I'm late?

We understand that it takes time to get from one space to another space and that navigating crowds and elevators might take some time. Because of this, there's some flex around your appointment time.

- For **pre-booked appointments**, you can arrive up to 5 minutes before the booked time and up to 10 minutes after the booked time. If you are concerned about missing this window, we recommend planning on being nearby (for example, in the hotel the event is happening in) a little early.
- For **the digital line**, you can arrive any time within 45 minutes of receiving the message that it's your turn.

Q: What if I don't have a phone, or can't get text messages?

There are several variations of what this question might mean:

- If you have a phone, but don't want to carry it around (for example, while suiting), that's OK. At your appointment, or when you receive the message that your turn in line has come, give your phone number to the security person at the event. They will verify it and let you in.
- If you don't have a phone at all, or don't have service in the US (for example, because you're traveling internationally):
 1. We generally recommend that all guests, including international guests, have some level of phone service for their safety. You can buy a pre-paid SIM card that allows you to text and call for around \$20 at the airport or in a nearby store. FWA is also working to obtain a small number of SIM cards, which we will provide at-cost at the Con Store while supplies last.
 2. Even if you don't have a US-capable SIM card, your phone likely has access to WiFi Calling (and texting), if your carrier allows it. Our queue system also has a phone app that can interact with our system. You can use either of these methods to interact with the virtual queue via the hotel WiFi.
 3. If none of these options work for you, you can still sign up for pre-booked appointments by visiting the Ambassador Desk; they will print you out a QR code to scan when your appointment arrives. Unfortunately, because the digital line requires some way to contact you, you will not be able to join the digital line this way.

Q: Will this lead to empty spaces and hurt artists or vendors?

The purpose of the virtual queue system is to ensure that spaces remain *near*, but not *over*, their safe room capacity. If spots are not fully booked and the digital line is empty, we will make an announcement and allow guests to enter freely.

Q: I'm a Silver, Gold, or Platinum sponsor. Do I get special access in this system?

Silver, Gold, and Platinum sponsors will receive a set of one-time-use QR codes (one per event) at Registration when they receive the rest of their sponsor gifts. We have set aside some pre-booked appointments for those sponsor tiers to use, which can be accessed by booking through that QR code. When it comes to the digital line, there is not a difference between sponsors and non-sponsors.

Q: I'm a Hoppy Hour VIP. Do I need to sign up to attend it?

Nope! VIPs get early access to Hoppy Hour and do not need to sign up through the virtual queue to access it.

Q: Why am I only allowed to pre-book once per day?

We are limiting pre-booking to once per day to ensure that everyone gets a fair shot at attending events. Remember: you can always join the digital line to gain access to these spaces, including multiple times per day.

Q: Which events use the Virtual Queue?

The virtual queue will be used to enter the Vendor Hall and Artists Alley, and to attend Hoppy Hour and Moonlight Festival. No other events use the virtual queue.