

The Civic Service Institute  
At Northern Arizona University

# Senior Companion Program



## Driver Handbook

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# **NAU Civic Service Institute**

## **Senior Companion Program**

### **Driver Handbook**

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# **NAU Civic Service Institute Senior Companion Program Driver Handbook**

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 About the Program**

The Senior Companion Program is sponsored by the Civic Service Institute at Northern Arizona University (NAU). The Senior Companion Program is a national Senior Corps volunteer program, funded by the Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS). The Civic Service Institute at NAU, serving as the central office for the Senior Companion Program, also pursues and receives grant funding from additional sources to support this volunteer program. The Senior Companions in Arizona join more than 330,000 Senior Corps volunteers nationwide who make a difference in their communities. Senior Companions help homebound seniors and disabled adults maintain independence.

This handbook is intended to help Senior Companion volunteers and RSVP volunteers serving as Senior Companions to be educated and informed about how to safely and respectfully transport clients during their volunteer service and what action(s) to take in case of an accident, concern for a client's welfare, or if they feel they or a client have experienced discrimination.

### **1.2 Our Mission**

The mission of the Civic Service Institute is to mobilize generations to strengthen communities through service and volunteerism. As part of its mission, the Civic Service Institute sponsors the Senior Companion Program to serve adults, primarily older adults, who have one or more physical, emotional, or mental health limitations and are in need of assistance to achieve and maintain their highest level of independent living. A key component of the services that Senior Companions provide to their clients is transportation.

### **1.3 Contact Information**

The Civic Service Institute is located in Flagstaff, Arizona, on the campus of Northern Arizona University. The Civic Service Institute's general contact information is:

The Civic Service Institute at NAU  
**Address:** P.O. Box 5063, Flagstaff, AZ 86011  
**Phone:** 928-523-3560, or toll-free at 1-866-856-3017  
**Email:** [naucsi@nau.edu](mailto:naucsi@nau.edu)  
**Fax:** 928-523-9189  
**Website:** [www.nau.edu/sbs/csi](http://www.nau.edu/sbs/csi)

Each area in which the Civic Service Institute sponsors the Senior Companion programs has a local program coordinator, who is the primary contact for all volunteers and partner agencies in that region. The area program coordinators include:

**Apache County**

Diana Lowell, 928-581-1872; SallyAnn Lofquist, 928-814-9809

**Coconino County & Winslow**

Michele Lytle, 928-523-1082

**Maricopa County**

Emily Litchfield, 480-352-2314

**Mohave County**

Nancy Rutherford, 928-715-2200

**Navajo County**

Diana Lowell, 928-581-1872; SallyAnn Lofquist, 928-814-9809

**West Yavapai County (Prescott Region)**

Jean Jongsma, 928-713-4114

**East Yavapai County (Verde Valley Region)**

Shana Smith, 928-202-8261

## 1.4 Service Area and Times

The Civic Service Institute sponsors the Senior Companion Program in six Arizona counties: Apache, Coconino, Maricopa, Mohave, Navajo, and Yavapai. Senior Companion services are offered Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, excluding holidays. Occasionally, volunteers and clients may desire to meet during evening hours or on a weekend. Any hours claimed by a volunteer during evening or weekend hours should be approved by the area program coordinator prior to the volunteer completing the hours.

Volunteers should perform regular service hours, preferably on the same days per week and during the same timeframes. Senior Companions are not to serve their clients on an “as-needed” basis or for “as-needed” transportation only. Senior Companions should serve each client for a minimum of four hours per week. If illness, vacation, inclement weather, or other circumstances prevent a volunteer from serving during their regularly scheduled service time, it is the volunteer’s responsibility to contact their partner agency supervisor, clients, and program coordinator to inform them of their absence. Volunteers must inform the partner agency supervisor, clients, and program coordinator of planned absences at least one week in advance. When possible, the Senior Companion may reschedule their client visit during a time that works for both the volunteer and the client. On the rare occasion that a client and companion cannot find an alternate time that works for both parties, the client’s transportation need may be

served by a substitute companion or an RSVP volunteer where available. If the Senior Companion Program is unable to meet the client's transportation need, the program will make every effort to refer the client to another agency in their community who can meet their transportation need.

The Senior Companion Program observes the following 13 holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Spring Holiday (Often assigned to Good Friday, Passover, or during the week of spring break)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Fall Holiday (often assigned to Columbus Day)
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas
- Christmas Eve or the day after Christmas

Partner Agencies may observe different holidays, which may be substituted for the holidays listed above; however, volunteers may not use more than 13 holidays per year.

## 1.5 Who We Serve

The area program coordinator will assign Senior Companion volunteers to partner agencies that have a current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NAU. The partner agency provides case management services for the clients to whom the Senior Companion volunteer is assigned.

The partner agency supervisor will assign the Senior Companion volunteer to serve adults (age 21 or older), primarily older adults, who have one or more physical, emotional, or mental health limitations and are in need of assistance to maintain their dignity and independence. Assignments and activities must involve person-to-person relationships with the individuals served. Senior Companions must be assigned to individual clients to in order to develop a personal relationship with each client. One Senior Companion working with many clients at one time does not provide the degree of support needed to foster meaningful relationships.

Each Senior Companion/client relationship is facilitated by an annual Care Plan & Letter of Agreement. The Care Plan & Letter Agreement form is signed when the relationship is initiated and every July thereafter. This document outlines the client's principal needs, emergency contact, schedule for visits, and is signed by the client, his or her case manager, the Senior Companion, the area program coordinator and the Senior Companion Program project director.

Due to the high demand for Senior Companion services and a limited pool of volunteers, not every client referral from a partner agency may be served. Clients with special circumstances may be matched with a Senior Companion volunteer when one becomes available who is equipped to handle such circumstances as:

- Clients who smoke
- Clients who have pets
- Clients with large wheelchairs, walkers, other mobility or medical devices

Because Senior Companions provide both transportation and assistance in the clients' homes, clients will not be served if they or their homes provide an unsafe environment for the Senior Companion volunteer. Examples of unsafe conditions include but are not limited to:

- Clients with contagious diseases
- Bed bugs
- Unsanitary conditions such as clutter or accumulated garbage
- Presence of animals, insects, or rodents
- Inadequate heat or ventilation
- Extreme temperatures in home (too hot/cold)
- Presence of noxious fumes
- Presence of drugs, paraphernalia, or weapons
- Lack of safe parking facilities
- Improperly sealed or stored hazardous materials like gasoline, solvents, or paints
- Absence of or improperly placed/working smoke detectors
- Lack of a suitable emergency escape due to cluttered living area, lack or poorly maintained elevator and/or stairwell, or other barriers to exit
- Ice or snow on client's sidewalk or driveway

A client whose home or person creates unsafe conditions that may harm health of the volunteer will not be served until the condition has been addressed and remedied. Clients may be required to provide certification that they no longer provide a health threat for visitors.

A Senior Companion's assignment to a client may be terminated if:

- The client develops acute functional difficulties
- The client improves to the point that the Senior Companion's services are no longer needed
- The client's family or friends assumes the Senior Companion's care-giving role
- The relationship is no longer meaningful or satisfying to the Senior Companion or the client
- The Senior Companion's physical or mental condition is detrimental to himself or the client served

Area program coordinators and partner agency supervisors work hard to ensure that volunteer placements and assignments are a good fit. However, volunteers may find that a placement or assignment is not a good fit for any number of reasons. Volunteers who wish to be reassigned to serve different clients should contact their partner agency supervisor. Volunteers who wish to be placed with a

different partner agency should contact their area program coordinator. Volunteers may request up to two placements or different assignments during one fiscal year, or up to five placements or different assignments during the course of their service with the Senior Companion Program. Volunteers who are dissatisfied with their placement or assignments after two placements or different assignments during one fiscal year, or five placements or different assignments during the course of their service may not be replaced or reassigned, and may be subject to dismissal.

### 1.5.1 Discrimination

Volunteers are prohibited from discriminating against program staff, partner agency staff, clients, clients' families, or anyone else with whom the volunteer may come in contact as part of their service duties on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, limited English Language proficiency, or political affiliation, as protected by federal law. Volunteers who violate the discrimination policy may be subject to corrective action, including dismissal.

### 1.5.2 Title VI

Northern Arizona University, the Civic Service Institute, and the Senior Companion Program are committed to a policy of non-discrimination, in compliance with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Title VI is a section of the Civil Rights Act requiring that, "No person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." Title VI does not address gender discrimination; it only covers race, color and national origin. (Other Civil Rights laws prohibit gender discrimination.) Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, or national origin by the Civic Service Institute's Senior Companion Program may file a Title VI complaint by completing and submitting the Senior Companion Program's Title VI Complaint Form, available on the Civic Service Institute's website: [www.nau.edu/sbs/csi](http://www.nau.edu/sbs/csi).

### 1.5.3 Americans with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. Northern Arizona University, the Civic Service Institute, and the Senior Companion Program are committed to a policy of non-discrimination, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Whenever possible, the Civic Service Institute will provide reasonable accommodations and materials in alternative formats upon request.

## 1.6 Benefits of being a Senior Companion Driver

### 1.6.1 Transportation Reimbursement

As funding allows, Senior Companion volunteers may be provided reimbursement for commute mileage driven to and from their volunteer assignment and for official program activities such as orientation, in-service meetings, advisory board meetings, and recognition events. Volunteers are encouraged to use the least expensive means of transportation and to carpool whenever possible.

Volunteers who drive their own vehicles will be reimbursed at the current rate, for a maximum number of commute miles (driving to/from assignment) per month. (For example, as of November 2013, the reimbursement rate for Senior Companions was \$.20 per mile for a maximum of 300 miles per month.) The reimbursement rate and maximum mileage for reimbursement is subject to change based on funding availability. Please contact your area program coordinator to find out the current reimbursement rate and maximum miles.

Senior Companions are allowed to transport their clients to and from doctor's appointments, shopping, social events, and other outings. Volunteers MAY NOT accept money from clients, clients' families, or clients' friends for transportation or other costs. Accepting or asking a client or family member of a client for reimbursement may be cause for corrective action or dismissal from the program. Senior Companion client-related mileage is considered a separate reimbursement from commute mileage, and therefore may have a separate reimbursement rate and maximum. Please contact your area program coordinator to find out the current rate and maximum for client-related mileage. The reimbursement rate and maximum mileage for reimbursement is subject to change based on funding availability.

Volunteers are encouraged to carpool whenever possible. When carpooling in a personal vehicle, only the driver of the vehicle will be reimbursed for mileage driven to and from the volunteer site or program activity. Volunteers MUST NOT pay one another for transportation expenses. Carpool drivers who are reimbursed by the program CANNOT ask for or accept money from others in the carpool. This may be cause for corrective action or dismissal.

Volunteers who incur parking costs while serving as a volunteer will be reimbursed for the actual cost of parking. Volunteers should attach a receipt for their parking costs to their monthly timesheet.

Volunteers who use multiple means of transportation are responsible for distinguishing between each type of transportation used on their timesheets, so that they may be reimbursed correctly.

Any misrepresentation of transportation reimbursement may be cause for dismissal.

### 1.6.2 Secondary Insurance Coverage

Senior Companions are eligible for three kinds of insurance: accident, personal liability, and excess automobile liability. These are **NOT** substitutes for personal insurance and only apply when the volunteer is engaged in official program activities or traveling to or from official program activities. Volunteers are not covered under federal or state workers' compensation as they are **NOT** employees.

The Senior Companion Program insurance is considered secondary coverage. Any insurance that the volunteer has will be billed first, and the volunteer will be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses, including copays (although there are exceptions to this rule).

The full provisions of the insurance coverage can be found online, at the following link: <http://www.cimaworld.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/1-All-Other-States1.pdf>

## 2.0 Safety First

### 2.1 Safety Guidelines

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining a safe working environment through their service and actions. Volunteers are required to:

- Comply with all federal, state, county, and local safety laws and regulations
- Observe all rules and regulations from their partner agency as it relates to the safe and efficient performance of their volunteer service
- Report or correct any hazards, unsafe equipment, or unsafe practices as appropriate
- Report to the partner agency supervisor and area program coordinator any accidents or injuries that occur to themselves or others while volunteering or participating in official program activities within 24 hours
- Report to law enforcement, the partner agency supervisor, and the area program coordinator any crimes, acts of violence, or threats of violence
- Refrain from coming in contact with infectious or hazardous materials, blood or bodily fluid, or any substance or equipment which may be hazardous or carry infectious diseases or viruses
- Wash hands before and after handling food
- Wash hands after using the restroom, nose-blowing, or grooming

Volunteers who do not practice proper safety procedures while volunteering or participating in official program activities may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

## 2.2 Be Prepared

There are several things Senior Companions can do to be prepared to help their clients and others in case an emergency arises:

- **Have a plan.** Having a plan of action in case an emergency arises can alleviate stress and uncertainty.
- **Be prepared for the unexpected.** Everyone can be more prepared in case of an emergency by keeping a few essentials handy. The Senior Companion Program recommends that all volunteer drivers keep a flashlight, a basic first-aid kit, bottled water, snacks, and in colder climates, a blanket, in their vehicles in case of emergencies.
- **Keep emergency phone numbers handy.** Who would your client want you to contact if something were to happen to them? Keep the client's Care Plan & Letter of Agreement (which lists this information) in an accessible place.
- **Be aware of your client's medications and medical conditions.** In a medical emergency, this information could be critical to medical personnel.

## 2.3 What to do in an Emergency

If an emergency does arise, Senior Companion volunteers should:

- **Call 911.** It's always better to be safe than sorry. If a client or other individual looks to be in medical distress, call 911.
- **Provide the level of help for which you are equipped or trained.** Make sure that you don't put yourself or anyone else at risk by trying to do something that is unsafe for you to do. If you can't safely help, don't help.
- **Stay calm.** Also, help the person in distress to stay calm.
- **Provide emergency personnel any information you have.** Sharing the client's medical conditions or medications will help provide them better care, and may save their life.
- **When possible, accompany clients to the emergency care facility.** Your friendly face may provide immeasurable comfort in a time of medical distress.
- **Report the incident to your partner agency supervisor and the program coordinator.** Make the report as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after the incident occurred.

## 2.4 Exposure to Bodily Fluids and Bloodborne Pathogens

While a Senior Companion's risk of exposure to another person's bodily fluids, including blood, is minimal, the Civic Service Institute desires to provide volunteers information about preventative measures to reduce exposure and risk to infectious diseases and bloodborne pathogens.

### 2.4.1 Preventative Measures

In order to reduce exposure and risk associated with coming in contact with another person's bodily fluids, the Civic Service Institute recommends:

- Volunteers stay up-to-date on their vaccinations, including Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C.
- Volunteers should assume that all bodily fluids are infectious, and take every precaution to avoid contact with them.
- Volunteers may keep a first aid kit in their vehicle containing paper towels, latex or vinyl gloves, and band aids to address minor cuts.
- Do not touch the fluid, needle, or other items with bodily fluids on them. If volunteers choose to provide initial first aid in the case of an accident involving injury, use latex or vinyl gloves before assisting the other person. Never re-use gloves.

#### 2.4.2 If Exposure Happens

If volunteers come in physical contact with another person's bodily fluids, be sure to follow these procedures:

- Wash the affected area as quickly as possible with soap and water, or flush with water if the eyes are affected.
- Seek medical attention no later than 24 hours after exposure. Follow the advice of your medical practitioner.
- Notify the partner agency supervisor and the program coordinator.
- Report any illness that occurs within 12 weeks after exposure to your medical practitioner and your area program coordinator.

### 2.5 First Aid & CPR

Senior Companion volunteers are not required to undergo first aid or CPR training. While some volunteer may have this training and choose to administer first aid or CPR in a crisis, volunteers are not required to undergo these trainings or administer first aid or CPR as part of their volunteer service. If a client or other individual needs medical attention, call 911.

### 2.6 Accident Policies

Any volunteer who is involved in an accident involving personal injury or damage to someone's belongings should **immediately** contact their area program coordinator, no more than 24 hours after the incident. The area program coordinator will interview the volunteer, and any other witnesses or participants as necessary. The area program coordinator will report the accident to the program director, who will take the appropriate action, which may involve contacting or coordinating with the Corporation of National and Community Service, CIMA insurance, law enforcement, and the sponsoring agencies to make sure that proper procedures are followed. Volunteers who are physically capable but fail to report an accident to their area program coordinator within 24 hours of the incident may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

## **3.0 Driver Conduct**

### **3.1 Respect for All Passengers**

We believe that everyone has the right to be treated with respect. Senior Companions are expected to act with the highest level of professionalism and service. Questions about what may or may not be appropriate and respectful behavior can be directed to the area program coordinator. Below are some general guidelines for Senior Companion drivers:

- Treat others as you would like to be treated.
- Use basic courtesies such as “please” and “thank you.”
- Be positive, pleasant, courteous, and cheerful. Smile.
- Do not react negatively or impatiently when a client asks you for help or takes longer than you would like to do something.
- Be punctual. If you are running more than 15 minutes late, be sure to call.
- Arrive ready to assist.
- Keep your vehicle, especially the passenger seat, clean of debris.
- Dress in a professional manner and maintain a professional appearance, appropriate for the activities scheduled during your client visit.
- Be accountable. If you say you will do something, do it.

### **3.2 People with Disabilities**

Every person with a disability is different. The following are general guidelines for working with people with disabilities. Of course, these guidelines are valid until someone with a disability tells you they would like to be treated in a different way. General guidelines include:

- Treat a person with a disability like any other person.
- Speak directly to the person with a disability.
- Ask the person how you can best assist them. They are the expert regarding their own particular needs.
- Offer assistance if it seems needed, but don't insist. Respect that person's right to reject help or indicate the kind of help needed.
- If you cannot help the client in the way they have requested, be open to talking about it with them. You also have rights to set limits on what you can and cannot do.
- Appreciate what the person can do. Many times the difficulties that a person faces have more to do with society's attitudes than the person's actual abilities.
- Be considerate of the time it might take for a person with a disability to do or say things. Let them set the pace of walking, talking, or other activities.

The above and following guidelines were adapted from Thomas E. Grayson's “Guide to Etiquette and Behavior For Working with Persons with Disabilities” and the Washington State Department of Transportation's Volunteer Drivers Guide.

### 3.2.1 People with Visual Impairments or Blindness

Many people who are considered legally blind do have some sight, rather than no sight at all. Some people who are visually impaired or blind can read braille; some cannot. Some general guidelines for working with people who have visual impairments include:

- Be specific and descriptive when giving directions, such as “two steps to your right.” Do not use references that are visually-oriented, such as “behind the woman with red hair.”
- If offering to guide the person, allow them to hold your arm (rather than holding them) so that they have control over their own movements.
- Do not move items in the client’s home or on their person. This can be frustrating and dangerous for the person.
- If you bring new items into the person’s environment, be sure to tell them where you have put them.

### 3.2.2 People with Hearing Impairments or Deafness

Many people who are considered deaf or hearing-impaired have some hearing, rather than no hearing at all. Some people who are deaf use sign language, lip-read, or speak; some do not. Some general guidelines for working with people with hearing impairments include:

- Find out how the person best communicates, and be patient if it takes longer to communicate than you are used to.
- If you are using an interpreter, talk to the person (not the interpreter).
- If the person uses hearing aids, avoid conversations in noisy surroundings.
- If you are unsure that the person understood what you said, feel free to ask.
- Be willing to repeat yourself if the person indicates that they didn’t understand.

### 3.2.3 People with Mobility Impairments or Wheelchairs

People with a wide range of physical abilities use wheelchairs and mobility aids, and will need different degrees of assistance. Some people use different kinds of mobility aids based on the purpose or setting. Not all mobility aids are made the same way; one person may be able to access an area in their wheelchair while another person in a wheelchair may not. Some general guidelines for working with people with mobility impairments include:

- Never move wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, or other mobility aids out of the reach of the person who uses them.
- Always ask the person in the wheelchair if they would like your assistance before pushing it.
- Be considerate of others’ personal space. Don’t lean on wheelchairs or pat wheelchair occupants on the head.

- When speaking to someone in a wheelchair, give them a comfortable viewing angle to look at you. Looking straight up is not a comfortable viewing angle.
- Before approaching a step, curb, or other obstruction, ask the person in the wheelchair how they want you to proceed. Be aware of your own limitations.

### 3.2.4 People with Speech Impairments

There are many reasons a person may have difficulty with speech. A few reasons include deafness, stroke, and head injury, to name a few. Some general guidelines for working with people with speech impairments include:

- Do not pretend you understand someone when you really don't. If you don't understand, bring it to their attention.
- Do not treat the person like they are drunk, mentally ill, or talk to them in a condescending manner. Many times their speech impairment has only to do with speech, not the person's cognitive ability.
- Consider writing as an alternative means of communication.
- Be patient if communication takes longer than you are used to.

### 3.2.5 People with Service Animals

The Senior Companion Program supports and encourages clients to use service animals. Whenever possible, volunteers who are equipped to handle service animals (no allergies, vehicles equipped for animals, etc.) will be assigned to volunteers who have them. A few guidelines for volunteers whose clients have service animals include:

- Service animals are not considered pets. Do not pet, call to, or interact with a service animal while it is working.
- Do not feed a service animal without the owner's permission.
- Always speak to the owner of the animal, not the animal itself.

### 3.2.6 People with Cognitive Disabilities

Like everyone else, people with a cognitive disability are very diverse in their interests and capabilities. Some general guidelines for working with people with cognitive disabilities include:

- Do not "talk down" to the person as if they are a child. Talk to the person the way you would any other adult.
- Engage the person in topics of conversation that you would with anyone else, such as current events, weather, vacation plans, etc.
- Use clear language, and be patient if you have to repeat yourself. Speak slower, if requested, but don't yell.

## 3.3 Code of Conduct

Senior Companion volunteers must conduct themselves with integrity and treat others with respect. While serving, volunteers must:

- Follow all federal, state, and local laws
- Participate in the activities outlined on the Care Plan & Letter of Agreement
- Show respect for clients, caregivers, partner agency supervisors, partner agency staff and volunteers, other program volunteers, the area program coordinator, and any other individuals or groups with whom the volunteer may come in contact
- Behave in a non-threatening manner. Threatening activity may include verbal threats, physical threats, or displaying weapons. Behaving in a threatening manner may be cause for dismissal.
- Follow the directions provided by their partner agency supervisor, except when it conflicts with Senior Companion Program policies
- Arrive to volunteer assignment in a timely fashion, and call if running more than 15 minutes late when possible
- Keep appointments with the area program coordinator, clients, and partner agency supervisors, or giving 24 hours of advance notice if cancelling when possible
- Stay in contact with the partner agency supervisor and area program coordinator, and informing them of changes in address and phone number, and respond to their calls or letters within 24 hours whenever possible
- Refrain from participating in strenuous activities (no lifting anything heavier than a filled grocery bag)
- Maintain confidentiality of client information at all times (see confidentiality policy in section 3.3)
- Perform service while not under the influence of any drugs (including prescription and over-the-counter) or alcohol (see drugs & alcohol policy in section 3.7)
- Refrain from participating in political activity or proselytizing while volunteering
- Dress in a professional manner and maintain a professional appearance, appropriate for the activities scheduled during service hours
- Refrain from discriminating against program staff, volunteers, partner agency staff, or clients based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, limited English Language proficiency, or political affiliation
- Refrain from loaning funds to or soliciting funds from clients, family of clients, partner agency staff, or program staff
- Refrain from sexual misconduct, including but not limited to unwelcome sexual advances or attention, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which others may find intimidating, hostile, or offensive
- Refrain from maligning or undermining the Civic Service Institute, its programs, mission, values, personnel, partner agencies, or other volunteers

Volunteers who do not comply with the codes of conduct listed above, as observed by the area program coordinator, partner agency supervisor or staff, or other volunteers, may be subject to corrective action or dismissal from the program.

### 3.4 Confidentiality

As part of their service, Senior Companion volunteers will know and have access to information concerning clients and other matters that must be held in the strictest confidence. Volunteers are responsible for holding this trust, as we believe everyone has the right to his or her own privacy. This is a moral and legal obligation.

Volunteers are allowed to discuss clients only with supervisors (the partner agency supervisor and the area program coordinator) and at the appropriate time and place. Volunteers are prohibited from divulging information which may cause embarrassment to the person served or their family. When discussing clients, volunteers are not allowed to use last names. Volunteers are prohibited from giving out a client name, address, or phone number.

Any breach of confidentiality may result in corrective action or dismissal.

### 3.5 Relationships with Clients & Clients' Families

Volunteers are prohibited from accepting money from clients or clients' families at any time, including personal time. Senior Companion clients or clients' families may not hire the Senior Companion for respite care, gaps in in-home care, transportation, or for any other purpose at any time.

Volunteers are not allowed to serve members of their own families as part of their Senior Companion assignment. Family members include:

- Aunt
- Brother
- Brother-in-law
- Daughter
- Daughter-in-law
- Father
- Father-in-law
- Grandchild
- Great grandchild
- Husband
- Mother
- Mother-in-law
- Nephew
- Niece
- Sister
- Sister-in-law
- Son
- Son-in-law
- Uncle
- Wife

Volunteers who are assigned to serve their family members should immediately inform the partner agency supervisor so that they may be reassigned.

Volunteers who knowingly accept an assignment to serve a member of their own family may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

Senior Companions may not maintain romantic relationships with their clients. If a Senior Companion and their client develop a romantic relationship, the

volunteer should immediately inform the area program coordinator so that they may be reassigned.

### 3.6 Suspected Abuse or Neglect

Senior Companions may encounter situations where they suspect that the client they are assigned to is being abused or neglected by another person.

Volunteers should document the reasons for their suspicions or what they have witnessed to the best of their ability and report this to their partner agency supervisor immediately, so the partner agency supervisor may take the appropriate action. The volunteer should also contact the area program coordinator immediately, so the area program coordinator may follow up on the issue with the partner agency supervisor.

If a volunteer is accused of abuse, the volunteer should contact their area program coordinator immediately. The program director will contact appropriate authorities, which may include the Corporation of National and Community Service, CIMA insurance, law enforcement, and the sponsoring agencies to make sure that proper procedures are followed. Whenever possible, a Senior Companion Program staff member will be present to support the volunteer throughout the investigation. The volunteer will be suspended until the investigation is complete and the volunteer has been cleared. If the investigation reveals that the volunteer has abused or neglected a client, the volunteer will be dismissed from the program and is subject to all federal, state, and local laws.

### 3.7 Drugs & Alcohol

Senior Companion volunteers should report to their volunteer service and official program activities in a condition to perform their service and participate in program activities safely, efficiently, and professionally. Volunteers are prohibited from serving or consuming alcohol or being intoxicated while driving, volunteering, or participating in official program activities. Volunteers are prohibited from using illegal drugs or misusing prescription drugs. Volunteers are prohibited from possessing paraphernalia for illegal drug use.

Volunteers may not knowingly put themselves or their clients at risk while driving. Volunteers are prohibited from driving if they have taken any prescription, over-the-counter medication, or other substance that is labeled as causing drowsiness as a side effect within the four (4) hours prior to or at any time during their volunteer shift. Any volunteer who is found to be using or under the influence of controlled substances or alcohol while driving to/from their partner agency/volunteer site, driving clients, or driving to/from participation in official program activities may be subject to corrective action or dismissal and if appropriate, reported to local law enforcement agencies.

### 3.8 Medical Marijuana

While Arizona's Proposition 203 legalized medical marijuana in Arizona, all marijuana (even for medical purposes) remains illegal under federal law. The

Senior Companion Program is federally funded, and must comply with federal law to be eligible for federal grant funding. Federal law classifies marijuana as a controlled substance and makes no exceptions for medical purposes. Therefore, volunteers are prohibited from unlawfully possessing, using, distributing, manufacturing, or dispensing marijuana while serving, while at their partner agency, or while participating in any official program activities. Volunteers found to be in violation of the medical marijuana policy may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

Senior Companion clients who are prescribed marijuana for medicinal purposes may not use marijuana within the four (4) hours prior the volunteer's visit. Clients also may not use marijuana while the volunteer is serving the client.

### **3.9 Smoking**

Senior Companions are requested not to smoke while driving Senior Companion clients, or within the half hour prior. Volunteers also may not smoke in a client's home, unless the client smokes in their own home and gives the volunteer permission to do so. However, if the client is on oxygen, smoking is not allowed in the home, even if the client gives permission to the volunteer. Smoking around oxygen is a severe fire hazard.

Volunteers may take two, 8-minute breaks or one, 15-minute break during their working schedule, which may be used for smoking. Volunteers must follow all federal, state, and local legislation as it pertains to designated smoking areas.

Volunteers found in violation of the smoking policy may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

### **3.10 Weapons and Violent Behavior**

Volunteers are prohibited from carrying firearms, explosives, or other dangerous or deadly weapons, either openly or concealed, while serving as a volunteer or during any official program activity. Intentionally or recklessly causing physical harm to any person while volunteering or during an official program activity, or causing reasonable apprehension of such harm, is prohibited. Volunteers are strictly prohibited from initiating or participating in any violent behavior. Volunteers who participate in any acts of violent behavior or do not comply with the weapons policy will be subject to corrective action or dismissal, and may be reported to local law enforcement agencies.

## **4.0 Senior Companion Program Driving Policies**

Volunteers may provide transportation to other volunteers in the program for official program events and trainings. Senior Companions may also provide transportation to their clients. Senior Companions cannot drive the client's friends or family members as part of their volunteer service nor can the volunteer bring their own friend or family member on a transportation trip/outing with the client.

All volunteers who drive to/from their volunteer site, or transport clients must maintain their vehicle in safe operating condition. Volunteers must abide by the state and local driving laws.

Volunteers must practice safe driving practices while commuting to or from volunteer service or official program activities or while transporting clients. Any volunteer or client who gives a partner agency supervisor or area program coordinator reason to believe that a volunteer who drives clients is an unsafe driver may be asked to discontinue driving clients until the volunteer passes a driving test. The volunteer must provide proof that the Arizona Department of Transportation has certified that the volunteer passed a driving test.

#### **4.1 Training**

All volunteers who drive must pass Defensive Driver Training with a score of 75% or better on a yearly basis and abide by the policies outlined in the Senior Companion Program Policy Manual and this Senior Companion Program Driver Handbook. Additional training is provided to volunteers upon enrollment in the program and at the monthly in-service meetings.

#### **4.2 Following Traffic Laws**

All volunteers who drive must be familiar with and adhere to state and local driving laws. Volunteers who violate traffic laws may be required to undergo additional training, or may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

#### **4.3 License & Insurance**

All volunteers who drive to/from their volunteer site, or transport clients must have a valid driver's license and have the minimum amount of automobile liability insurance coverage required by law. Volunteers who drive without a valid license or without the minimum amount of automobile liability insurance covered by law may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

#### **4.4 Seat Belts**

Volunteers must abide by the state and local laws regarding seat belts and buckle up on every trip. Every time a volunteer transports other people in their vehicle, including other volunteers or clients, all people in the vehicle must have and use seat belts. The driver is responsible for ensuring all persons in their vehicle have and use fully-functioning seat belts during every trip. Volunteers who do not use seat belts while driving, either for themselves or their passengers, may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

#### **4.5 Cell Phones**

Volunteers are prohibited from using cell phones while driving to or from their volunteer service or driving while engaged in official program activities, especially while driving Senior Companion clients. Volunteers who use cell phones while driving may be subject to corrective action or dismissal. Volunteers may pull off the road into a parking lot, fully stop the vehicle, put the vehicle in park, and then make or take a cell phone call.

## 4.6 Driving a Client's Vehicle

Senior Companions are prohibited from driving a client's vehicle. Senior Companions may only transport clients in the volunteer's vehicle. Volunteers who drive their clients in the client's vehicle may be subject to corrective action or dismissal.

## 4.7 Program Records

Volunteers should report their hours, clients served, miles, trips, and trip purposes on their monthly service log/timesheet. Questions about how to fill out the service log/timesheet should be directed to the area program coordinator. Volunteer service logs/timesheets are due to the area program coordinator at the monthly in-service meeting.

# 5.0 When Complications Arise

## 5.1 Inclement Weather & Emergency Closures

During inclement weather, volunteers should check their local news to find out if schools are closed. If the local school district announces that schools are closed or on a delayed start schedule due to inclement weather, Senior Companions should not report for service during the period that the schools are closed. Inclement weather may include:

- Snow
- Ice
- Temperatures below zero degrees
- Heavy rain
- Lightening
- Haboob (dust storm)
- Smoke and/or fire
- Temperatures above 110 degrees

When schools are closed or on a delayed start schedule, Senior Companions are responsible for informing their partner agencies, clients, and the area program coordinator that they will not be reporting for service or will report later than usual due to inclement weather.

When schools are on a delayed start schedule (for example, starting one or two hours late) due to inclement weather, Senior Companion volunteers should not report for volunteer service until the time that schools open. Volunteers will be

reimbursed for any hours missed during a delayed school schedule if they were scheduled to serve during those hours.

If schools do not close or are not in session, and a volunteer feels unsafe reporting to service due to inclement weather, the volunteer should contact their partner agencies (if open), clients, and area program coordinator. In this circumstance, volunteers may use personal leave or leave without pay.

Partner agencies may close in cases of emergency. If a volunteer is prevented from reporting to service due to a partner agency's emergency closure, the volunteer will be reimbursed for the hours they were scheduled to serve on that day, for up to five days. Meal and transportation reimbursements will not be reimbursed during a partner agency's emergency closure.

## 5.2 When a Client Cancels

Clients may cancel their regularly scheduled visit with a Senior Companion volunteer for any number of reasons, including illness, travel, guests, etc. Clients are asked to provide the Senior Companion with at least a 24 hour advanced notice if they must cancel their scheduled visit with a Senior Companion volunteer. Whenever possible, the Senior Companion and client should reschedule the visit.

If a client does not contact the Senior Companion volunteer to cancel a visit in advance, and does not answer the door with the companion arrives, the volunteer should try to call the client. If the client does not answer the phone when the companion tries to call, the companion should contact the partner agency supervisor. The partner agency supervisor will call the client's emergency contacts to ensure the client is okay. Volunteers should document that they attempted to visit their client on their timesheet/service log.

Clients who are physically capable but twice neglect to cancel a Senior Companion's scheduled visit in advance may not continue be served.

## 5.3 When a Client Has a Complaint

If a client has a complaint against the Senior Companion volunteer or the Senior Companion Program, the client should contact the partner agency supervisor. The partner agency supervisor will work with the area program coordinator to determine a course of action, which may include:

- Assigning a new Senior Companion to the client when one becomes available
- Corrective action or dismissal of the volunteer
- Discontinuing Senior Companion services to the client
- Corrective action within the Senior Companion Program to improve its policies and procedures

Clients who feel they have been discriminated against by Senior Companions or members of the NAU community may visit the Civic Service Institute's website ([nau.edu/sbs/csi](http://nau.edu/sbs/csi)) and fill out a Title VI complaint form. While Title VI specifically

covers discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin, the same form may be used for other types of discrimination as well.

Complaints against members of the NAU community may also be directed to NAU's Affirmative Action Office: [nau.edu/affirmative-action](http://nau.edu/affirmative-action) or 928-523-3312.

## **Volunteer Driver Agreement**

### **Volunteer Copy**

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy or am able to access a copy of the Civic Service Institute's Senior Companion Program Driver Handbook. The handbook can be accessed online through the Civic Service Institute's website at [www.nau.edu/sbs/csi](http://www.nau.edu/sbs/csi).

I understand that the Driver Handbook sets forth the duties, responsibilities, and obligations of my status as a Senior Companion volunteer driver through the Civic Service Institute at NAU. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read the Driver Manual, and abide by the rules, policies, and standards it sets forth. No oral statements or representations can change any provisions of this Driver Manual. I understand that this Driver Manual supersedes all prior agreements, understandings, and representations concerning my volunteer status as a Senior Companion volunteer driver through the Civic Service Institute at NAU.

I also understand that the Civic Service Institute at NAU reserves the right to revise, delete, and/or add to the provisions of the Driver Manual. If any changes are made, I understand that the area program coordinator will make an announcement at the monthly in-service meeting, and it is my responsibility to find out this information if I am absent from an in-service meeting. If changes are made to this handbook, the Civic Service Institute will publish a red-lined version and a clean, updated version of the Driver Handbook on the Civic Service Institute's website. I acknowledge that the online Driver Handbook contains the most up-to-date information, and it is my responsibility to obtain and review the latest version of the Driver Handbook.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_