

**Senior Companion Program**

**Driver Handbook**

The Center for Service and Volunteerism at Northern Arizona University

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# Change Log

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| **Change** | **Effective or Update Date** |
| Reorganized sections and Table of Contents for information to flow similarly to FGP/SCP Volunteer Policy Manual. | October 25, 2024 |
| Updated Time Off section to include bereavement, jury duty, and time off without pay. | October 25, 2024 |
| Updated Supplemental Insurance section-added volunteer coverage is applicable in all 50 states when volunteer is on official program activities or travel. | October 10, 2024 |
| Updated staff contact list. | October 17, 2024 |
| Added Change Log table | October 17, 2024 |
| Updated Title VI section with latest complaint instructions. | January 1, 2023 |
| Updated Holiday Leave section to include 14 total holidays and added Juneteenth as of June 2023. | January 1, 2023 |
| Changed section title from Inclement Weather to Disaster and Emergency Response (DER) Leave and updated section to include Pandemic and further clarification on emergency closures. | November 7, 2022 |
| Updated Defensive Driver Training section- Removed defensive driver test requirement for both SCP and FGP. Defensive Driver Training continues to be a requirement for SCP and recommended for FGP. | July 1, 2022 |
| Updated language and name changes to reflect CNCS/AmeriCorps rebranding, Civic Service Institute to Center for Service and Volunteerism rebranding, and Senior Corps to AmeriCorps Seniors rebranding. | January 1, 2021 |

# Introduction

## About the Program

The Senior Companion Program is sponsored by the Center for Service and Volunteerism (CSV) at Northern Arizona University (NAU). The Senior Companion Program (SCP) is a national AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer program, funded by AmeriCorps. The Center for Service and Volunteerism 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 143,000 AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers nationwide who make a difference in their communities.

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 actions to take in case of an accident, concern for a client’s welfare, or if they feel they or a client have experienced discrimination.

## Our Mission & Vision

The mission of the Center for Service and Volunteerism (CSV) is to enrich lives and strength communities through service and volunteerism. We aspire to be a leader in the field of service and volunteerism by supporting a vibrant and diverse network of individuals and partner agencies who are making an exceptional impact throughout Arizona supporting direct service, capacity building, professional development, and innovation. As part of its mission, CSV 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.

## Contact Information

CSV’s main office is located in Flagstaff, Arizona, on the Northern Arizona University’s campus.

CSV employs local program coordinators, who are the primary contact for all volunteers and partner agencies in that region. The area program coordinators include:

**Coconino County (Flagstaff only)**

Vacant

**Maricopa County**

Hope Clapp, 623-776-0203

Erin Young (Chinese Senior Center), 480-352-2314

**Mohave and La Paz Counties**

Vicki Nelson, 928-715-2200

**West Yavapai County (Prescott Region)**

Joella Willey, 928-713-4114

**Yuma County**

Jesus Meza, 928-276-2891

# Senior Companion Driver Benefits

## 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 Training, 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, which is the State of Arizona mileage reimbursement rate, for a maximum number of commute miles (driving to/from assignment) per month. For example, the reimbursement rate for Senior Companions is $.655 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. Exceptions for mileage reimbursements will be considered on a case-by-case basis and dependent on funding availability. Please contact your area program coordinator to find out the current reimbursement rate and maximum miles.

NAU Policy allows Senior Companions 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(s). 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 use the bus or other forms of transportation with a published fare will be reimbursed for the actual fare paid per trip, or for a weekly/monthly pass, up to the maximum monthly reimbursement amount (subject to change depending on program funding availability.) Whenever possible, volunteers should attach a receipt for their travel expenses to their monthly timesheets. If a volunteer utilizes a transportation provider that does not have a published fare, such as a taxi or rideshare company (like Uber or Lyft), they will need to provide documentation of the expense incurred to be eligible for reimbursement.

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

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 whenever possible.

Any misrepresentation of transportation reimbursement may be cause for dismissal. Volunteers will be reported to the Federal Office of Inspector General. Volunteers may be prosecuted and/or fines may be given, to those who violate this policy depending on the outcome of the investigation from the Office of Inspector General.

## Supplemental 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 in all 50 states. For example, volunteers crossing state lines to take clients for medical appointments or grocery shopping because these out-of-states services are the best option for them. 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 co-pays (although there are exceptions to this rule).

The full provisions of the insurance coverage can be found online, at the following link: [CIMA Volunteer Insurance Forms - CIMA World](https://www.cimaworld.com/nonprofits/cima-volunteers-forms/)

See Accident Reporting section for more information.

# Volunteer Service

See FGP/SCP Volunteer Policy Manual for a full description of these policies.

## Service Area and Hours of Service

The Center for Service and Volunteerism sponsors the Senior Companion Program in six Arizona counties: Coconino, La Paz, Maricopa, Mohave, Yavapai, and Yuma. Senior Companion services are offered Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. 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.

## Time Off

Paid time off may be used at the volunteer’s discretion, for sickness, illness, injury, the illness or injury of an immediate family member, vacation, other personal time, bereavement, or Jury Duty. Volunteers may also take one leave of absence without pay for up to 180 days. It is the volunteer’s responsibility to contact their partner agency supervisor, clients, and program coordinator to inform them of their planned absence at least one week in advance or if illness prevents a volunteer from serving during their regularly scheduled service time.

### Holiday Leave

The Senior Companion Program observes the following 14 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
      * Juneteenth
      * 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 14 holidays per year.

### Disaster and Emergency Response (DER) Leave

The primary concern of the Senior Companion Program during a disaster or emergency is the immediate safety and security of its volunteers.  Volunteers should check their local news to find out if their partner agencies are closed.   If the partner agency announces a closure or delayed start schedule, volunteers should not report for service during the closure period.  If partner agencies do not close yet a volunteer feels unsafe reporting to service, the volunteer should contact their partner agency supervisor and their program coordinator. Emergency closures may result from any of the following, but are not limited to:

* Inclement Weather (unusual and dangerous for your area)
* Snow
* Ice
* Temperatures below zero degrees
* Heavy Rain
* Floods
* Lightening
* Haboob (dust storm)
* Temperatures above 110 degrees
* Smoke and/or fire
* Pandemic
* Contagious Illnesses

# Client Relations

## 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.

In case of an MOU expiring and partner agency does not wish to renew MOU, the agency cancels in the middle of the agreement, or some other extenuating circumstances, CSV will stand in as the partner agency until and if a new agency is assigned. This would include signing required Senior Companion Program documents, including but not limited to timesheets and Care Plan/Letter of Agreement. If a replacement partner agency is not available or a non-agency affiliated client is enrolled, then the process stands as stated above. Program Manager approval is required for enrolling new non-agency affiliated clients.

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, partner agency staff, the Senior Companion, the area program coordinator and the Senior Companion Program Manager.

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 three 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 three placements or different assignments during the course of their service may not be replaced or reassigned and may be subject to dismissal.

## 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, creed, belief, 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.

## 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.

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.

## 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.

# Title VI

Arizona Board of Regents for and on behalf of NAU’s Center for Service and Volunteerism operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, national origin or disability in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Any person who believes she or he has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI may file a complaint with theArizona Board of Regents for and on behalf of NAU’s Center for Service and Volunteerism.

For more information on the Arizona Board of Regents for and on behalf of NAU’s Center for Service and Volunteerism’s civil rights program, and the procedures to file a complaint, contact **Pam Heinonen, Equity and Access Office; 928-523-3312,** [equityandaccess@nau.edu](mailto:equityandaccess@nau.edu)**;** or visit our administrative office at Old Main, Building 10, PO Box 4083, Flagstaff, AZ 86011**.**  For more information, visit <https://in.nau.edu/center-for-service-and-volunteerism/title-vi-information> or <https://in.nau.edu/eao>.

Complaints may be filed directly with the Arizona Department of Transportation **(ADOT) Civil Rights Office.**  ATTN: Title VI Program Coordinator 206 S. 17TH Ave MD 155A RM: 183 Phoenix AZ, 85007 or with the Federal Transit Administration **(FTA).**  ATTN: Title VI Program Coordinator, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE Washington DC 20590

If information is needed in another language, contact **928-523-3312**.

\*Para información en Español llame: **928-523-3312**.

\*  **928-523-3312** 

## Complaint Process

The AmeriCorps Seniors Program will investigate complaints received no more than 180 days after the alleged incident and will only investigate complaints that are complete.

Once the complaint is received, the AmeriCorps Seniors Program will investigate the complaint within 30 days. The AmeriCorps Seniors Program will also immediately report any transit-related complaints to the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Civil Rights Office. If more information is needed to resolve the case, the AmeriCorps Seniors may contact the complainant. If the investigator is not contacted by the complainant or does not receive the additional information, the AmeriCorps Seniors Program may administratively close the case. A case can also be administratively closed if the complainant no longer wishes to pursue the case.

After the investigator reviews the complaint, he/she will issue either a closure letter or a letter of finding to the complainant. A closure letter states that there was not a Title VI violation, and the case will be closed. A letter of finding states that there was a Title VI violation and explains what corrective action will be taken to remedy the situation. For transit-related complaints, a copy of the final investigation report will be forwarded to ADOT’s Civil Rights Office. If the complainant wishes to appeal the decision, she/he has 30 days from the date of the closure or letter of finding to file an appeal in writing with the AmeriCorps Seniors Program. Please mail appeals to:

NAU Center for Service and Volunteerism

AmeriCorps Seniors Program, Title VI Complaint Appeal

P.O. Box 5063

Flagstaff, AZ 86011

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

A person may also file a complaint directly with ADOT at:

ADOT Civil Rights Office

206 S. 17th Avenue, Mail Drop 155-A

Phoenix, AZ 85007

A person may also file a complaint directly with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) at:

FTA Office of Civil Rights

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE

Washington, DC 20590.

The complainant is protected against retaliation. Retaliation or retribution of any kind taken against an individual as a result of that person filing a complaint is strictly prohibited. Any person found to have violated this policy of non-retaliation is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

## Americans with Disabilities Act

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 Center for Service and Volunteerism, and the Senior Companion Program are committed to a policy of non-discrimination, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Whenever possible, the Center for Service and Volunteerism will provide reasonable accommodations and materials in alternative formats upon request.

# Safety

## 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.

## Accident Reporting

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 manager, who will take the appropriate action, which may involve contacting or coordinating with AmeriCorps, 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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 Center for Service and Volunteerism desires to provide volunteers information about preventative measures to reduce exposure and risk to infectious diseases and bloodborne pathogens.

## Exposure Preventative Measures

In order to reduce exposure and risk associated with coming in contact with another person’s bodily fluids, the Center for Service and Volunteerism 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.

## If Exposure Happens

If volunteers to 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.

## 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.

# Driver Conduct

## 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)
* Perform service while not under the influence of any drugs (including prescription and over-the-counter) or alcohol (see drugs & alcohol policy)
* 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, gender, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or limited English Language 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 Center for Service and Volunteerism, 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.

## 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 verbally commit to doing something, do it.

## 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 face have more to do with societal 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

# 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.

# 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.

# 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.

# 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.

# Driving

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 a safety evaluation is made. This may include requiring the volunteer to pass a driving test or receive clearance from a medical professional. In these situations, the volunteer must provide proof that the Arizona Department of Motor Vehicles has certified that the volunteer passed a driving test or a letter from their physician stating they have no health issues that would contraindicate driving.

## Defensive Driver Training

All Senior Companion volunteers who drive as part of their volunteer service to and from their volunteer site and/or who drive clients must participate in the Defensive Driver Training and/or review the Senior Companion Driver Handbook. Both are led by the area program coordinator during the Pre-Service Training and annually thereafter. This training requirement must be met to be eligible for mileage reimbursement, regardless of the amount of mileage reimbursement they request annually and whether or not the volunteer transport clients. Senior Companion volunteers who drive clients must also abide by the policies outlined in the Senior Companion Driver Handbook.

## Senior Companions who do not participate in the mandatory driver training will be prohibited from driving clients. 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## Drugs and Alcohol

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.

## 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.

## 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.

## Program Records

Volunteers should report their hours, clients served, miles, and trip purposes on their monthly timesheet. Questions about how to fill out the timesheet should be directed to the area program coordinator. Volunteer timesheets are due to the area program coordinator at the monthly In-Service Training.

# When Complications Arise

## 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.

## 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 Center for Service and Volunteerism’s website ([nau.edu/csv](http://www.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 Center for Service and Volunteerism’s Senior Companion Program Driver Handbook. The handbook can be accessed online through the Center for Service and Volunteerism’s website at [www.nau.edu/csv](http://www.nau.edu/csv).

I understand that the Driver Handbook sets forth the duties, responsibilities, and obligations of my status as a Senior Companion volunteer driver through the Center for Service and Volunteerism 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 Center for Service and Volunteerism at NAU.

I also understand that the Center for Service and Volunteerism 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 Training, and it is my responsibility to find out this information if I am absent from an In-Service Training. If changes are made to this handbook, the Center for Service and Volunteerism will enter the changes in the Change Log table of the handbook. 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.

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| Date: |  |

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| Printed Name: |  |

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| Signature: |  |

Volunteer Driver Agreement

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