Newton Department of Senior Services Volunteer Handbook

Staff:

Director of Senior Services- Jayne Colino
Administrative Coordinator - Alice Bailey
Program Coordinator- Joanne Fisher
Geriatric Clinical Social Worker- Kathy Laufer, LICSW
Outreach Worker - Meghan Kennedy
Site Managers- Van Drivers- Custodians
Administrative Assistant - Social Work Intern

**"People who say it cannot be done,
should not interrupt those who are doing it."**

MISSION STATEMENT

The Newton Senior Center is a place for older adults to gather in an atmosphere that promotes and utilizes life experiences and skills.

The Center's goal is to provide an environment that validates the changing needs and interests of the individuals and enhance growth, dignity and connection with each other and the greater community.

Through creative programming, The Newton Senior Center provides participants opportunities and resources in the areas of physical and mental health, nutrition, recreation and education.

WHO IS A NEWTON SENIOR CENTER VOLUNTEER?

A Newton Department of Senior Services Volunteer is a man or a woman who enjoys being helpful and productive.

PHILOSOPHY OF VOLUNTEERISM

The staff of the Newton Department of Senior Services is indebted to its corps of volunteers for all that they teach us through their work and support of our goals and missions.

It is our philosophy that volunteers are our greatest resource. We try to place them in positions that will be pleasing and satisfying to them and will contribute to the overall betterment of the center and what it offers. Our volunteers are encouraged to speak their minds, in appropriate forums, so that we are always improving our systems and providing an ever better workplace. Our volunteers are never required to do any task that they do not care to, for any reason.

Our goal is to have a smooth-running corps of "para-professionals" who are receiving, as much as they are giving in their contributions to the life of Newton Seniors.

★ A Newton Department of Senior Services Volunteer is expected.....

- to be supportive of the department and its mission.
- to participate in the orientation and training required for the volunteer's position.
- to perform assignments to the best of the volunteer's abilities.
- to participate in the planning and reviews relevant to the volunteers position (meetings).
- to be dependable, cooperative, and accountable.
- to contribute constructively to the resolution of problems and conflicts.
- to value and express appreciation for the efforts and achievements of others.
- to accord all others respect, equal opportunity, and fair treatment.

★ A Newton Department of Senior Services Volunteer may expect.....

- equal opportunity and consideration throughout recruitment, appointment, training and service.
- information concerning volunteer opportunities and appointments based on the volunteer's interests and capabilities.
- a written position description (upon request).
- an orientation to the department and the program to which the volunteer is assigned, and the training needed to carry out the responsibilities of the position.
- encouragement, guidance, and the resources necessary for successful performance.
- inclusion in the planning and decision making relevant to the volunteer's activities.
- respect, recognition, and appreciation for the volunteer's efforts and contributions.

POLICIES

THE NEWTON SENIOR CENTER

The Newton Senior Center houses the Newton Department of Senior Services and is the site for most of the programs and services offered by the department. It is located at 345 Walnut St., Newtonville.

TRANSPORTATION:

Van transportation is available to any Newton senior citizen, age 60 years+. See attached sheet with chart and explanation of Transportation system.

LUNCH:

The Newton Senior Center, at 345 Walnut St., serves hot/ cold lunch choice on weekdays at 11:45. Reservations must be made by 11:00a.m. the previous day. If one is coming on a Monday this means call by 11:00a.m. Friday. These lunches have a suggested donation of $1.75 each to be made confidentially *near* our "Lunch Check-in" table. Those without reservations are asked to wait until those with reservations have been served. If we have enough food we will graciously serve those waiting.

FRONT DESK:

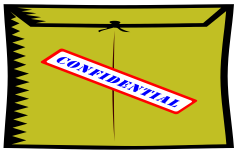
Every Senior Center participant, /visitor,/ volunteer, is asked to swipe their card at the front reception desk (main entry at rear of building). This is done **each day** of attendance. New participants fill out an information form to have a swipe card made for them. Those without a card are entered into the system, manually. In this way, we will collect important data that will help us to answer questions asked by our funding sources.

DONATIONS, PAYMENTS, ETC.

The Newton Department of Senior Services has many sources of funding and many costs attached to the successful running of such a department. Because our costs and our expenditures are very close, we need to make clear that donations are needed from all. Those who cannot afford the suggested amounts are encouraged to give *what they can, when they can*. Volunteers are cautioned that any knowledge they may have concerning individuals and their donations, must remain confidential, as this is sensitive information and each individual's right to privacy must be respected. ***Volunteers, by definition, are not paid, and are therefore expected to make donations and payments as any other participant.***

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION:

The staff of the Newton Department of Senior Services has put together a list of "Guidelines for Participation" that provides a way of determining who is, and is not, an appropriate participant here. This has been done with the understanding that our staffing cannot responsibly oversee those who are not at level of independence where their safety can be assured. These will be provided to any individual upon request.



CONFIDENTIALITY

Our volunteers have always been adept at dealing sensitively with participants. It is our aim to provide each participant with a sense of security derived from a policy of confidentiality and mutual respect. This is especially highlighted in our system of "resource and referral" when individuals may need to reveal them selves to get needed information. We maintain a master list and it is available for staff and volunteer purposes. Please maintain confidentiality. ***Do not hand out names and addresses.*** (If a situation arises, take the name and number of the person calling and you make the contact for them. If you get permission you may exchange phone numbers.)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

1. Volunteers are considered unpaid employees and as such are accountable to State Ethics Commission Rulings.
2. Volunteers may not solicit paid clients for their services while serving the Newton Department of Senior Services.
3. Volunteers may not hand out business cards while serving Newton Department of Senior Services
4. Volunteers may not advertise their services at the Senior Center or in Newton Department of Senior Services publications.
5. Volunteers may not offer information about their for profit services while serving the Newton Department of Senior Services
6. Volunteers may not use their position to gain benefit others may not receive.

YOU COUNT!

Every day that you come to the center to volunteer, to participate, or both, it is very important that you **"swipe-in"!** Swipe cards are available through the receptionist or from the office on the mezzanine. If you do not have a card (lost, misplaced or not yet made up) we can put you into the system manually. What is most important is that we know you have been here and what you have done while here. This includes **tracking the number of volunteer hours** you have contributed.

WHY? Each quarter a report is generated that culminates in a yearly (annual) report. This cites the numbers of participants, the numbers of volunteer hours, etc. These reports are submitted to funding sources that want to know that the money they allot us is doing its job. Additionally it gives us information about what you want and what you need, so that we can serve you ever better. PLEASE remember to sign-in and remind others of the importance of this task.

One important factor in this is that many people use the front door, facing Walnut Street. They may forget or overlook **the "swipe" machine located at the Main Entrance at the rear of the building.** Remind yourself and others to make sure that you are COUNTED!

(As with any technology, sometimes there are problems. If you cannot sign-in please find a staff person to assist you, or leave your name and information at the reception desk to be put into the system later.)

Recruitment, Performance Evaluation, Retirement /Termination

Recruitment:

Volunteers come to the Newton Department of Senior Services from many sources. The Program Coordinator advertises the need for volunteers with specific interests or skills. Links with other volunteer resources are also employed. Many volunteers seek out the center on their own.

Each potential volunteer is interviewed by the Program Coordinator to determine what job he/she will be assigned. The interview includes collection of pertinent personal information and screening for appropriate job placement. If volunteer is unfamiliar with the center, a tour is included. A CORI check (Criminal Offender Record Check) is done through the Department of Human Resources. The volunteer is then, scheduled to begin training and work.

Performance Evaluation

The Program Coordinator and/or the immediate supervisor will review the volunteer's job performance as needed. If job performance issues arise, every effort will be made to address the issue: additional training, support or reasonable accommodations conducive to the volunteer position. If this need arises there will ongoing job review until problem is resolved, a new more suitable position found or retirement/ termination.

Retirement

The decision to retire may be one made solely by the volunteer or by the volunteer and the Program Coordinator, together. Sometimes the volunteer task becomes too taxing or complex for the volunteer and sometimes the job is eliminated due to changes in the center's operations or programs. The volunteer is encouraged to discuss this decision with the Program Coordinator in a confidential manner.

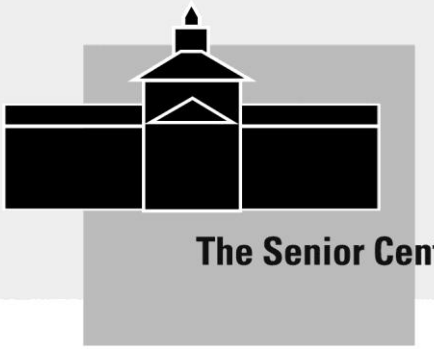
Grievance

If a volunteer should have a grievance about anything pertaining to their volunteer service, they are encouraged to speak with the Program Coordinator and/ or immediate supervisor. If they prefer they can speak with the Director of the Department of Senior Services.

The Mayor's Office, through the Citizen's Assistance Officer, is always open to hear citizens grievances, as well.

City of Newton
Department of Senior Services

Newton Council on Aging



The Senior Center