



Helping Neighbors stay connected, active, and independent

## **Volunteer Guidelines**

## **Our Mission:**

**Village Connections' mission is to create a supportive community for seniors to age in place by helping them stay connected, active and independent. To accomplish this we must promote the well-being of our membership through a network of local volunteers and activities.**

## **Our Vision:**

**As an urban, community-based organization, Village Connections empowers and engages its members to lead an active life in their neighborhood and promotes age-inclusive activities.**

**Village Connections appreciates the time and effort that each Volunteer contributes. Our organization aims to enhance our members' health and wellness needs and support their social and cultural interests. Our mission simply cannot happen without your commitment.**

**This guide is designed to answer questions you have about being a volunteer. We encourage you to contact our office whenever you have a question or concern.**

**Phone: 614.226.6567**

**Email: [info@villageconnectionsolumbus.org](mailto:info@villageconnectionsolumbus.org)**

**Address: 588 S. Third Street, Columbus, Ohio  
43215**

**Thank you for your decision to volunteer!**

## **General Information**

Village Connections is an urban, community-based non-profit organization that empowers members to lead an active and engaged lifestyle in their own homes as they age. By providing a network of high-quality volunteers and resources for members' evolving needs, this grassroots organization offers information and referrals to cost-effective services and activities designed to enhance members' health and wellness, support their social, educational, and cultural interests, and foster member-to-member volunteer support.

Our organization was the first of its type in Central Ohio and mobilizes residents of several historic, urban neighborhoods who wish to stay in their homes as long as possible as they age. It also activates neighborhood volunteers who assist members with transportation and minor household chores and screens vendors who provide discounted home maintenance, home care, and other services. In addition, Village Connections develops strategic civic, corporate, educational, and health alliances to deliver services and programs, stretch resources, and rigorously evaluate its program outcomes. Village Connections volunteers are fully vetted by a background check.

Village Connections is part of The Village-to-Village Network, a national organization across the country. Originally, we received help from The Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging and members of the German Village Society Long Range Planning Committee who helped with the research and best practices of successful villages across the United States. We have a diversified funding stream including private individuals, corporations, and grants.

Our organization has two types of memberships: Service Receiving and Social. The Service Receiving membership is for persons aged 50 and over, who live in our catchment area and would like to make use of the services we offer. The Social membership is for persons of any age who don't need services but want to participate in our social events and support our organization with a 100 percent tax-deductible contribution. Social members do not need to live within our catchment area.

Our volunteers are the lifeline of the organization and do not need to live within our catchment area. Volunteers are responsible for creating positive and lasting experiences for our members. One should never underestimate the value of the time that a volunteer spends with a member and how that time shared impacts the individual. Your time might be the only social interaction that they have that week/month. Your time has incredible value! Volunteering is the best gift you can give, and you will most assuredly receive a gift in return; you get the gift of that individual.

As a Volunteer, you will be the face of our organization to our members and the public. We expect the following from our volunteers:

- contact the member the day before your visit
- be prompt and reliable
- decline monetary tips and gifts
- under no circumstances handle cash or credit cards without the member present
- notify the Director as soon as possible if an appointment must be canceled
- sign a Confidentiality Agreement and Conflict of Interest form
- If a member reaches out to you directly to provide a service, please ask them to contact the office to schedule the service.

**Privacy and Confidentiality:** Volunteers must maintain the confidentiality of personal information to which they may be exposed while serving as a volunteer. Information must never be shared — except with the Director— when the volunteer feels it is reasonable and necessary in fulfilling a service for a member.

**Drivers:** Village Connections volunteers who drive must affirm they have a valid driver's license and car insurance. Drivers will be covered by their own insurance.

**Emergency Procedures:** If Village Connections volunteers or staff see or hear an emergency (e.g. someone calling out for help), we ask that they contact 911 and remain on the phone until authorities arrive. The Village Connections office should then be contacted at 614-226-6567.

If you arrive for a scheduled service and are unable to contact the member or they are not present, please contact the Village Connections office and we will get in touch with their emergency contact(s) for next the steps.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

Generally, the kinds of services we offer fall into these categories:

**Driving Members:** This is our most often requested service. Driving may include taking a member to an appointment, shopping, or a Village Connections social event.

**Friendly Calls and/or Home Visits:** Keeping in touch with members is crucial. Volunteers can help us determine the specific needs of individual members and help members to feel less isolated.

**In-Home Support:** This may include anything from changing light bulbs or replacing batteries in a smoke detector to raking up leaves. Snow removal and light furniture moving are other examples of how you may help members in their homes.

**Grocery/Prescription Pickup:** Members sometimes require someone to go shopping for groceries. This process is different from a typical request and is outlined further in the “Fulfilling a Service Request” section of the Volunteer Guidelines.

**Technology Assistance:** Members have different levels of technical assistance needs, which could range from setting up a new laptop and printer to downloading a new app or helping with a cell phone.

**Office Help:** Several times throughout the year we need to do large mailings, needing help with addressing and stuffing envelopes. Along with this, there are other opportunities to help with general office duties including scheduling member and volunteer services, data input, and helping with our monthly newsletter.

**Social Engagements:** As a volunteer, you are invited to participate in the many activities we provide for members. You can check the calendar of events on the Village Connections website ([www.villageconnections columbus.org](http://www.villageconnections columbus.org)) to see what is happening each month. We encourage you to become a social member so you can participate in our full schedule of events. This will qualify you to come to several special parties and member-only events we provide our members each year.

## **Tips for Volunteering with Aging Adults**

- **Communication**
  - Speak loudly without shouting.
  - Speak more slowly and articulate.
  - Be sure to look at them when speaking.
  - Practice active listening and check for understanding by repeating back or asking questions.
  - Focus on one idea at a time.
- **Mobility**
  - Offer a hand or an arm when needed.
  - Walk on the opposite side of a cane.
  - Hold a walker steady as they are transitioning to a seating position.
  - Be sure to lock the wheelchair wheels before they get in or out of it.
  - If unsure of how to fold a mobility device, ask them.
- **Patience**
  - Give them plenty of time for mobility.
  - Listen attentively.

- Ask questions.
  - Avoid questions about their health diagnoses for privacy reasons (unless they open the door to that conversation).
  - Ask about their day, what they had to eat, and who have they seen recently. Get their thoughts on the weather, and current events (maybe avoid politics!).

**If you have concerns about the member's health or safety, please give your thoughts to the Director.**

## **Fulfilling a Service Request**

- Village Connections uses a database called Helpful Village to manage our service requests. Volunteers will receive emails from our database twice a week with pending service requests. From the email, you can log on to the database to pick up service requests that fit with your schedule.
- After logging in, go to "Service Requests" under the volunteer tab.
- Click "view" next to a service request. You will see additional information about the request.
- Click "I can do it. I Volunteer" to sign up for the request. You will receive a confirmation email and be able to add it to your calendar.
- You will receive a reminder via email the day before the service.
- The day before, please call the member to let them know you will be the one completing the service. You'll also confirm the time and receive any other special instructions.
- After the service, you will receive an email asking you to complete an evaluation for the service. This is not mandatory, but it is helpful to the office to tell us about your experience.

### **Transportation**

- Meet the member at their door. Assist them to your car, and make sure they are buckled before you begin driving.
- When you arrive, please help the member out of the car and into the location. If they are at a doctor's appointment, help them check in.
- You can wait in the reception area or in your car. If it is a longer appointment, you can give the member your phone number and have them call you when they are done.
- Please help the member back to your car and make sure they are in safely.
- Please make sure the member is safely in their home before you depart.

## Grocery Shopping

- The time when you grocery shop is generally flexible, as long as it is done on the day requested. Please call the member to determine a time that works best for both of you.
- You will pick up the list from the member or have them tell you when you call them.
  - You will need to stop by the office to pick up an organization credit card.
  - Do not use your cards or cash to grocery shop for a member.
- Go to the grocery store that the member would like you to shop at (typically either Giant Eagle or Kroger).
- If there is not an item the member has on the list, call the member to ask if they want anything else as a replacement.
- Once complete, return to the members' home and drop off the groceries. Fill out both portions of the grocery pick-up form. If the member is paying by check, have them fill their check out for the amount on the receipt and make it out to Village Connections. Leave the top portion of the grocery pick-up form and the receipt with the member. Bring the bottom portion of the form, the check, and the credit card back to the office.
- Every member is a little different when it comes to their grocery shopping. Please do not hesitate to call the office if you have questions.

## Home Maintenance

- Usually, the date and time of home maintenance are flexible. Please call the member to determine a date and time that works best for both of you.
- The maintenance that the member is requesting will be in the service request. If you do not feel comfortable with that type of maintenance, please do not accept the request.

Occasionally, members will request additional services that were not described in the initial service request. This can include tasks such as stopping at the bank or picking up groceries. **You are not required to do any task that was not outlined in the initial service request.** You can if time allows you to do so. If you do provide any additional service, please update us with the total additional time spent.

We are neighbors helping neighbors. Volunteers should **never** feel obligated to perform a task they are not comfortable with.

If a member reaches out to you directly to provide a service, please ask them to contact the office to schedule the service.



## **ADL Policy**

Village Connections is a volunteer-powered organization performing services that a neighbor might do for another neighbor. Our goal is to help older adults in our community age in place.

The following guidelines are in place in order to ensure the safety of our members and volunteers.

(1) The Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) are self-care activities that include personal hygiene/grooming, dressing, toileting, transferring or ambulating, and eating.

(2) Village Connections requires that if a member is unable to complete any ADLs on their own, or if at any time should become unable to complete any ADLs on their own, it will require the presence of a home health care provider to perform ADL services when the member is being transported or attending functions. Volunteers are not allowed to transport a member or complete other services if a skilled home health care provider is not present. If a home healthcare worker is not present when a volunteer arrives to perform a service, the service request must be rescheduled.

## **VILLAGE CONNECTIONS CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is the preservation of privileged information. By necessity, personal and private information is disclosed in a professional working relationship. Part of what we learn is necessary to provide services to our members. Some information gained about our members, through our work with our members, is confidential in terms of the law, and disclosure could make Trustees, volunteers, staff, and Village Connections, itself, legally liable. Disclosure of confidential information can also damage our organization's relationships with our members and make it difficult to provide the help we seek to provide.

It is the policy of Village Connections that members of the Board, volunteers, and staff shall not disclose confidential information belonging to, or obtained through our affiliation and work with Village Connections. This policy is not intended to prevent disclosure that is required by law.

Board members, volunteers, and staff are cautioned to demonstrate professionalism, good judgment, and care to avoid unauthorized or inadvertent disclosure of confidential information.

Upon separation from a term on the Board or employment as a member of the staff or as a volunteer, the individual shall return all documents, papers, and other materials that may contain confidential information.

Failure to adhere to the policy shall result in discipline including separation from employment, volunteering, and Board service.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

I agree to treat as confidential all information about Village Connection members and their families that I learn during my service to Village Connections and I understand that it is a violation of Village Connections' Policy to disclose such information to anyone outside the organization.

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

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

## **VILLAGE CONNECTIONS CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Conflict of Interest means a conflict, *or the appearance of conflict*, between the private interests of an individual serving in any capacity with Village Connections and the official responsibilities of a person who holds a position of trust in Village Connections. The person in a position of trust may be a member of the Board, a volunteer, or a member of the staff of Village Connections.

The purpose of the Conflict-of-Interest Policy for Village Connections is to prevent the personal interests of members of the Board, volunteers, and staff from interfering with the performance of their duties to Village Connections, or result in the personal financial, professional, or political gain on the part of the individual at the expense of Village Connections and its Board, volunteers, and staff.

It shall be the Policy of Village Connections to require an annual "conflict of interest" full disclosure statement from every member of the Board, volunteers, and staff by signing a Statement regarding any conflict and/or non-conflict in January of each year.

Conflicts of Interest disclosed to the Board shall be in the sole prevue of the Board to determine if a conflict does exist. If it is determined that a conflict exists, the Board shall vote to authorize or reject any such transactions upon which the conflict is reflected and determine the best actions to take to address the conflict and to protect the best interests of Village Connections.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE**

\_\_\_\_\_ I HAVE NO CONFLICT OF INTEREST TO REPORT.

\_\_\_\_\_ I HAVE THE FOLLOWING CONFLICT(S) OF INTEREST TO REPORT  
(please specify)

By affixing my signature, I note my understanding of the Conflict of Interest Policy of Village Connections.

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

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



Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Purchase: \_\_\_\_\_

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Check# (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Groceries \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Prescriptions \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

**Total Amount Spent**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Payment due upon receipt

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

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

Please use Village Connections' Kroger Card by using the alternate ID 614.306.7408

Please return bottom copy to Village Connections



Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Purchase: \_\_\_\_\_

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Check# (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Groceries \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Prescriptions \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

**Total Amount Spent**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Payment due upon receipt

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

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