

FRIENDLY VISITOR *Volunteer* **GUIDE**



Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Schuyler County Office for the Aging (OFA). OFA volunteers are making a difference in the lives of older adults, age 60+ in Schuyler County.

Friendly Visitor is a rewarding position! Volunteers visit with older adults in need of socialization. This provides a safety check, socialization and gives them the independence to remain in the place they love most, home!

This handy guide will provide you with all of the essential information to help you decide if Friendly Visitor is the right position for you. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Best regards,

Holly Patelunas



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History

Schuyler County Office for the Aging was established as a result of the Older Americans Act of 1965 with the core function being provision of information/referrals and services for county residents age 60 and over, as well as their caregivers. A variety of programs are offered through nutrition services, in-home services, benefits assistance and general services.

The Office is funded by the Administration on Aging, the NYS Office for the Aging, County of Schuyler, client contributions, sponsorship, and general donations.

Our mission



To advocate for, educate and assist the senior and disabled populations of Schuyler County to live in the most independent and integrated setting through community collaboration providing for well-being/health, security, dignity, autonomy and choice through innovative home and community-based services.

If you, or someone you know is in need of services, please Call Schuyler County Office for the Aging at 607-535-7108.

Benefits of Volunteering

MIND



- Improve your mood
- Reduce stress & anxiety
- Combat depression

BODY



- Stay active
- Reduce risk of high blood pressure & heart disease
- Live longer

SOCIAL



- Create new connections & friends
- Develop emotional stability
- Combat loneliness/ isolation

CAREER



- Build confidence
- Develop skills
- Build your resume

What is Friendly Visitor?

The Friendly Visitor program is a program designed to help combat loneliness and isolation by engaging older adults in conversation and provide a weekly safety check.

Volunteers are matched with clients on a one-to-one basis, bringing compassionate conversation and care into their lives and giving volunteers an opportunity to listen and learn. We are always looking for friendly, caring individuals to provide support and friendship.

Office for the Aging provides full training and we are available to support you throughout your volunteer journey with any questions or issues.

Friendly Visitor position description

VOLUNTEER JOB DUTIES:

- Provide companionship and socialization through weekly visits.
- Visit 1-2 x/week; approximately 30 min-1.5 hours each visit.
- Coordinate days and times of calls with the client.
- Ask questions to encourage conversation: refer to known or list of client interests.
- Engage client in discussions that promote feelings of well-being, uplifted mood and positive feelings.
- Use timesheet provided to document date and length of each call and submit monthly to the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Mileage reimbursement is available.

SKILLS REQUIRED:

- Friendly & easygoing
- Good hearing/good listener
- Unbiased
- Ability to transport yourself to and from the clients home for visits
- Ability to speak clearly
- Understand the limitations experienced by some individuals
- Ability to maintain strict confidentiality regarding client information
- Good record keeping
- Timely reporting



Friendly Visitor Volunteer FAQs

WHY IS VOLUNTEERING WITH OFA IMPORTANT? Volunteering your time helps older adults age 60+ in Schuyler County remain safe, healthy and independent in the place they love most, home.

WHY IS THERE A VETTING PROCESS FOR VOLUNTEERS? Older adults are a vulnerable population and in order to protect our clients, we require all volunteers to complete a volunteer application, criminal background check, motor vehicle record check, reference check, phone interview and approval from both the Office for the Aging Volunteer Coordinator and the County Administrator.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO BE APPROVED TO VOLUNTEER? It typically takes about 1-2 weeks to approve a volunteer.

HOW MANY HOURS AND HOW OFTEN WILL I BE EXPECTED TO VOLUNTEER? We can set up a volunteer schedule that works for you. Friendly Visitor requires at least 30 minutes, once a week. Be sure to mention your preferred days and times you wish to volunteer when you complete the volunteer application.

HOW MANY PEOPLE DO I NEED TO VISIT? Friendly Visitor does not require a specific amount of visits to be made. You can visit one person, once a week or multiple people. It's completely up to you.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO VOLUNTEER? Friendly Visitor requires you to contact your client(s) once a week. A typical Friendly Visit lasts approximately 30 minutes-1 hour, 1-2x/week.

HOW DO I SIGN UP? Call Schuyler County Office for the Aging at 607-535-7108 to request a volunteer application, or email hpatelunas@co.schuyler.ny.us. The volunteer application can either be printed and mailed or emailed.

WHEN DO I START TRAINING? Once OFA receives your completed volunteer application, they will review it and an OFA staff member will reach out to you when we have an open position and set up training.

WHAT IF I DON'T LIVE IN SCHUYLER COUNTY? We accept volunteers from outside of Schuyler County. Snowbirds are welcome too!

CAN I RESCHEDULE IF SOMETHING COMES UP? Yes! Please give us as much advance notice as possible.

Volunteer Opportunities



HOME DELIVERED MEALS- deliver delicious & nutritious meals to homebound older adults.



SHOPPING ASSISTANCE - Assist older adults with grocery shopping and/or medication pick up.



PERSONAL & MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION - provide transportation to meet the personal needs of clients such as medical appointments, ride to grocery store, pharmacy, banking, hair appointments & more.



CONGREGATE MEAL SITE ASSISTANT & KITCHEN HELPER - Assist at congregational meals sites with various kitchen related duties.



To learn more about our volunteer opportunities contact the Volunteer Coordinator at 607-535-7108



ENTERTAINMENT - Professional performers volunteer their time to provide entertainment.



EDUCATION - Professional educators provide both virtual or in person courses to older adults. For example history, writing club, book club, arts & crafts.



HEALTH & WELLNESS - Health & Wellness professionals volunteer their time to provide a program or service.



VIDEO CAMERA OPERATOR/VIDEO EDITING - Assist with operating and shooting video and/or video editing for social media and other special projects.



HELLO NEIGHBOR - Friendly phone chat and safety check once a week to homebound older adults.



HEALTH INSURANCE COUNSELORS - provide free, unbiased Medicare counseling to Medicare beneficiaries.



CLERICAL - Handling all types of office duties including but not limited to making phone calls, filing, data entry, preparing mailings.



ADVISORY COUNCIL - Voluntary group that provides information, guidance, advice and support to the Office for the Aging to develop, coordinate and administer services to older persons.



PUBLIC RELATIONS - Public relations including the Golden Glow newsletter and many other custom opportunities available.