



# Station Manual



UServeUtah Senior Companion Program

*Make Independence a Reality.*

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# Dear Adult and Aging Services Professional,

We are excited to partner with your organization as you support older adults on a daily basis. The UServeUtah Senior Companion Program will make a positive impact on the lives of your clients and our volunteers as they build relationships that will enable older adults to continue to live independently and healthily. Senior Companions are an invaluable community resource. The companionship provided by an SCP volunteer can ease the pain of loneliness and social isolation, which can make living independently more difficult and impact every other health indicator. Senior Companions can also ease the heavy burden of caregivers who need a break from their caregiving responsibilities. This person-to-person peer support will truly benefit the lives of your clients.

By allowing Senior Companions to serve your clients, you make a reciprocal impact, as SCP volunteers also benefit from serving. Research has shown that service in the Senior Companion program improves the volunteer's physical health and mental health, including higher levels of happiness, sense of purpose, self-esteem, and decreased anxiety and depressive symptoms.

The UServeUtah Senior Companion Program (SCP) places Senior Companions in the following Utah counties, seeking to increase access to the program to rural and underserved communities: Box Elder, Cache, Carbon, Emery, Grand, Juab, Millard, Piute, Rich, San Juan, Sanpete, Sevier, Summit, Tooele, and Wayne.

Thank you for your interest in and support of the UServeUtah Senior Companion Program! Please be in touch if you have any questions that are not answered in this station manual. We value the opportunity to work with you.

**Laura Huefner**

*AmeriCorps Seniors Program Manager*

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# OVERVIEW

## Senior Companion Program

In 1968 the Senior Companion Program (SCP) began as a demonstration project at the Administration on Aging with a goal for low-income older adults to help their more frail peers remain independent in their homes. Since being ratified by Congress in 1973, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the Senior Companion Program provide companionship and support to other adults in need of extra assistance to remain at home or in the community for as long as possible. AmeriCorps Senior volunteers in SCP serve from 5 to 40 hours a week and receive hourly stipends to help offset the costs of volunteering. Volunteers must be age 55 or older and meet established income eligibility guidelines. In addition to the stipend, they receive accident, personal liability, and excess automobile liability insurance; assistance with the cost of transportation; and recognition.

## AmeriCorps

In 1993, AmeriCorps was established by Congress to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation. Today AmeriCorps serves more than 5 million individuals of all ages and backgrounds to help meet local needs through a wide array of service opportunities. These include projects in six priority areas: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families through AmeriCorps's core programs: AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors. AmeriCorps is part of our nation's history of commitment to building a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility. The Senior Companion Program is one of the AmeriCorps Seniors programs and focuses on the priority area of healthy futures.

## UServeUtah

UServeUtah, the Utah Commission on Service and Volunteerism, was created by state statute in 1994 and is comprised of 20 members representing local government, community-based organizations, and statewide networks as well as 15 staff. Since its inception, UServeUtah has worked to inspire, equip, and mobilize individuals and organizations to take action to transform their communities. The UServeUtah Senior Companion grant program started in

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2021 as a way to bring Senior Companions to underserved communities that have not had the program for many years.

## Program Station Requirements

A volunteer station is an organization that partners with the AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program to assign and supervise volunteers in the service of the station's clients. Volunteer stations can be a public agency, a faith-based or secular private non-profit organization, or a proprietary healthcare organization. Each volunteer station must be licensed or otherwise certified, when required, by the appropriate state or local government. Neither informal groups nor private homes qualify as volunteer stations.

The following are the responsibilities of the station:

- Identify clients within your program that could use the service of a Senior Companion volunteer
- Support with completing the Letter of Agreement and Volunteer Assignment Plan documents required for each placement of a volunteer with a client;
- Be available to counsel with AmeriCorps Seniors staff on volunteer assignments to ensure that clients and volunteers are satisfied with the pairing;
- Communicate any concerns or issues to AmeriCorps Seniors staff so that appropriate changes can be made as necessary;
- Sign monthly timesheets of volunteers;
- Review volunteer performance monthly in review of timesheets; and
- Return scanned monthly timesheets by email to AmeriCorps Seniors staff.

Federal law requires that volunteer stations not discriminate against Senior Companions or in the operation of its program on the basis of race; color; national origin, including individuals with limited English proficiency; sex; age; political affiliation; religion; or on the basis of disability, if the participant or member is a qualified individual with a disability. Persons with

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disabilities shall be provided reasonable accommodation to participate in the program or activity.

## How the Program Works

### Service Activity

Senior Companions provide companionship and respite visits to older adults in the community. The Senior Companion will visit each client they are assigned three to four hours weekly during one to two visits. Each client will have a Letter of Agreement and Volunteer Assignment Plan that will describe and authorize the activities that will happen in the home. As each individual client is different, each assignment plan will match the needs of that client. In determining service activities for each client, the program will keep the whole person in mind and try to help the client with various kinds of needs that may be physical, cognitive, and social.

### Steps to Develop and Manage the Letter of Agreement and Volunteer Assignment Plan

Individual letters of agreement and volunteer assignment plans are required for all AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in SCP. Letters of Agreement and Volunteer Assignment Plans are developed by the station representative and the AmeriCorps Seniors Program Coordinator:

- Development of Letters of Agreement and Volunteer Assignment Plans:
  - Station identifies prospective clients to be served;
  - Station and AmeriCorps Seniors coordinator use the Letter of Agreement and Volunteer Assignment Plan to document:
    - The specific need(s) of the clients;
    - The activities the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer will perform, the schedule for their visits, and the supervisory relationship between the volunteer and the volunteer station;

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- The expected results of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer's activities;
  - AmeriCorps Seniors Coordinator obtains signatures of approval on the letter of agreement from the client and station staff, and the approval of the station staff and volunteer on the assignment plan.

## Background Checks

The Senior Companion Program is required by the Serve America Act law to perform the following checks on Senior Companions serving in the program: NSOPR (National Sex Offender Public Registry check), FBI fingerprint, and the Utah State Repository Name Check. All of these checks must be completed prior to the placement of a Senior Companion. Senior Companions cannot serve before the results of these screenings have been received and cleared.

## Training

A Senior Companion receives 20-hours of Pre-Service Training from UServeUtah in preparation for conducting companionship and respite care visits. Pre-Service Training includes an orientation as well as initial visits that qualify as on-the-job training.

Senior Companions continue to receive training as they serve through monthly In-Service Trainings. These mandatory, monthly trainings cover information on older adults and how to be an effective SCP volunteer. Senior Companions will need to be excused from their typical schedule on days that in-service meetings are held, and can rearrange visits for that week.

## Prohibited Activities

The Senior Companion Program is a federally funded program and as such has established prohibited activities. These include:

- Political activities: Volunteers are prohibited from engaging in partisan or nonpartisan activities during stipend service hours (i.e. electoral duties, voter registration, voter transportation to polls, lobbying, efforts to influence legislation);
- Religious activities: Volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any form of proselyting, religious instruction or worship during stipend service hours;

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- Non-displacement of employed workers: Volunteers may not perform any service or duty or engage in any activity that would otherwise be performed by an employed worker or which would supplant the hiring or result in the displacement of employed workers.
  - Fee-for-Service: Volunteers cannot receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardian, members of their family, or friends.



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# Program Station Forms

For Senior Companions to serve with your organization as a station, the following forms must be completed.

## Memorandum of Understanding

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with your organization must be negotiated prior to placing volunteers. The MOU describes program requirements, working relationships, and mutual responsibilities between UServeUtah and your organization. The MOU includes general conditions applicable to all projects and volunteer stations and special conditions applicable to the local volunteer station. The MOU is renegotiated every three years.

## Letter of Agreement

Letters of Agreement document the special need of the client to be supported by a Senior Companion.

- Letters of Agreement contain a statement authorizing a volunteer assignment in a person's home and designating the activities to be performed. The Agreement also defines arrangements for days and hours of service and the specific plan for the volunteer's supervision.
- The person to be served (or their legal guardian), a volunteer station representative, and the UServeUtah staff member signs the letter of agreement.
- The Letter of Agreement provides a common understanding of what the volunteer will and will not do while on an in-home assignment.
- Client information: Letters of Agreement are not shared with the volunteer. Information, including date of birth and veteran status, are used for grant reporting purposes in aggregate. No individual information is used in these reports. All other information is helpful for matching a volunteer placement.

## Volunteer Assignment Plan

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The Volunteer Assignment Plan is required for all SCP volunteer service assignments. The assignment plan describes and authorizes the activities that the volunteer will perform and the anticipated results of those activities. It also outlines the volunteer's visiting schedule. The completed assignment plan becomes the volunteer's "job description." The assignment plan must be approved and signed by the UServeUtah program staff, a station representative, and the SCP volunteer.

## Home Safety Checklist

UServeUtah uses the Home Safety Checklist to determine if the client's home environment is safe for the placement of a volunteer. If the station does routine visits to the client, please fill out the Home Safety Checklist and the program coordinator will sign. If not, the coordinator will visit the client and make the assessment.

## Senior Companion Monthly Timesheets

Each Senior Companion receives a monthly timesheet to keep track of their hours and travel. All timesheets must be signed by the station supervisor or designee, attesting to the accuracy of the timesheet, and the Senior Companion before being signed by the UServeUtah staff. The volunteer may round their service hours to the nearest quarter hour as necessary. They also must record their mileage on a mileage log.

The Monthly Timesheet should be scanned and returned by email to the UServeUtah Senior Companion Program by the 3rd of the following month that the timesheet hours are recorded (e.g. June timesheet due by July 3rd).

# Senior Companion Service

## Appropriate Activities:

The following are appropriate Senior Companion service activities:

### **Social/Recreational:**

- Providing companionship, talking, listening;
- Playing games/cards;
- Listening to music;
- Fostering client contact with family and friends;

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- Accompanying the client to a recreational or social event.

**Personal Care:**

- Limited assistance with feeding and grooming;
- Limited assistance with walking, getting out of bed, getting to the bathroom;
- Provide a reminder to take medication. *The client must make their own decision to take the medicine. A Senior Companion will not give medication or fill pill boxes.*
- Accompany to a doctor or nurse for treatment;
- Encourage exercise, taking walks with client.

**Nutrition:**

- Light food preparation, plan meals, do light grocery shopping, label and organize food.
- Provide health or nutrition information when instructed. Encourage client to eat a regular, well-balanced diet with adequate fluids.
- Accompany client to a nutrition site (i.e. Senior Center).

**Home Management:**

- Light shopping, errands. *Shopping should be limited to one day per week at the grocery store closest to the client's home.*
- Writing letters, reading, filling out forms (*on a case by case basis, with client permission in Letter of Agreement*);
- Light housekeeping;
- Light gardening.
- Information and Advocacy:
  - Provide information about community services;
- Respite Care:
  - Assisting homebound clients to temporarily relieve caretaker burden.

**Transportation:**

- Senior Companions have limited mileage to transport clients to appointments and on errands.

## Inappropriate Activities

Some examples of inappropriate Senior Companion activities include:

**Professional duties:**

- Activities usually performed by doctors, nurses, or other professionals, such as administering medications or cutting toenails;
- Assistance with toileting, bathing, and lifting;
- Custodial services normally provided by paid staff;

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- Lifting client, wheelchairs, or heavy walkers

**Financial management:**

- Depositing cash in the bank for the client (they can take client to the bank for the client to deposit cash);
- Handling client money or financial transactions.

**Housekeeping:**

- Major household repairs;
- Window washing;
- Major house cleaning;
- Heavy household chores;
- Snow shoveling, lawn mowing;
- Changing sheets;
- Large furniture moving;
- Heavy lifting (e.g., heavy boxes, garbage cans).

**Transportation:**

- Using the client's car to transport client;
- Requesting multiple trips and long drives.

**Meal preparation:**

- Extensive meal preparation for client or others;
- Preparing food for persons other than client;
- Cleaning up after guests.

**Companion inappropriate activities:**

- Accepting gifts or financial gratuities (tips) from client;
- Purchasing lunch for client or client purchasing lunch for companion;
- Soliciting services to or for client;
- Smoking in client home, or while transporting client;
- Drinking any alcoholic beverages in client's home, or while transporting client;
- Purchasing or providing access to alcoholic beverages;
- Purchasing or providing access to tobacco products for a client who is restricted from smoking or when deemed a hazard by family members;
- Lending money or other items to client; borrowing money or other items from client.

## Accidents/Injury

All Senior Companions are covered with supplemental accident insurance through the UServeUtah Senior Companion Program. If you become aware that a Senior Companion is

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injured during their work hours, please report the incident to UServeUtah AmeriCorps Seniors Office immediately. We will fill out an accident report and guide the Senior Companion through the process. If the Senior Companion needs to seek medical attention they need to go where their primary insurance is accepted. Our insurance will pick up any additional expenses not covered by Medicare or their private insurance carrier. Senior Companions should never go to a Work Med or a Workman's Comp healthcare facility.

## Contacting Our Office

### Central Office

Laura Huefner	Program Manager	<a href="mailto:lrhuefner@utah.gov">lrhuefner@utah.gov</a>
Hannah Cragun	Program Specialist	<a href="mailto:hannahcragun@gmail.com">hannahcragun@gmail.com</a>

### Cache/Box Elder/Rich

Cynthia Jensen	Program Coordinator	<a href="mailto:cynthiajensen@utah.gov">cynthiajensen@utah.gov</a>
Debbie Sparks	Program Coordinator	<a href="mailto:dksparks@utah.gov">dksparks@utah.gov</a>

### Carbon/Emery

Stefanie Moore	Program Coordinator	<a href="mailto:smoore@seualg.utah.gov">smoore@seualg.utah.gov</a>
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### Summit

Wendy Carrigan	Program Coordinator	<a href="mailto:wcarrigan@utah.gov">wcarrigan@utah.gov</a>
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### Tooele

Amber Einerson	Program Coordinator	<a href="mailto:aeinerson@utah.gov">aeinerson@utah.gov</a>
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### Six County (Juab, Millard, Piute, Sanpete, Sevier, & Wayne)

Maradee Peterson	Program Coordinator	<a href="mailto:maradeep@sixcounty.com">maradeep@sixcounty.com</a>
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# Appendices

- A. Letter of Agreement
- B. Volunteer Assignment Plan
- C. Home Safety Visit Checklist
- D. Volunteer Timesheet