



Facilitating Independent Living

Volunteer Manual

Welcome!

Thank you for becoming an Interfaith Caregivers volunteer. We are confident that your volunteer experience will be a great one. The hour or so you spend with a client may not seem like a big deal to you, but it means the world to the clients we serve. To them, you're a hero.

What We Do

Our purpose is to encourage and facilitate independent living for people 65 plus and disabled persons living in Haddon Heights and Haddonfield. We also accept non-residents if they are members of congregations based in either town and live in a bordering town.

Through volunteers like you, we provide: transportation, grocery shopping, companionship, respite care, errands, telephone reassurance and meals on a short term basis. Interfaith Caregivers is a non-sectarian, nonprofit organization supported by donations from individuals, area businesses, civic organizations, and houses of worship.

Getting Your Assignments:

You are in the driver's seat – tell us how you prefer to be contacted and when, and that is what we will do. We work within your time perimeters. You decide what types of assignments you want to do and when you are available.

You decide how you want to get your assignments:

Online

- Use our interactive, online scheduling system to see what is available, select assignments that work with your schedule, report the time it took to do the assignment, and keep track of your volunteer mileage for tax purposes.
- Once we enter you in the system, you will receive regular emails that include an interactive list of available assignments. Just click "accept" beside the ones you want. Schedule weekly or a month

ahead, whatever works best for you. You will receive a confirming email immediately and phone or text reminders the day before your assignments if you like.

- Access the system anytime by going to www.ifcrides.com, entering your email address, and using a password that will be assigned to you. You can change your password to something easier to remember any time you enter the system.

Telephone

- If you aren't into computers, or just prefer to talk to a human, you can call the office and we'll help you select an assignment. The office number is 856-354-0298. Office hours are 9am to 5pm, Mondays through Fridays. If we can't get to the phone, leave a message on voicemail and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.
- Our office volunteers will also call you from time to time to offer you assignments for the coming weeks.

Permanent Assignments

- You may prefer to have the same assignment on a regular basis. Some of our volunteers find it easier to manage their schedules this way.
- A permanent assignment is one where a client makes a standing appointment to go grocery shopping, or go to the hairdresser, or some social event that occurs on the same day and time on a weekly or biweekly basis.
- Once you find a permanent assignment you like, we will contact you during the month to ask about your availability for the next month. **Of course, any time you cannot do that assignment, all you have to do is contact us and we will find a substitute volunteer for you.**

When You Accept a Volunteer Assignment

The Day Before:

- Call the client to confirm you are coming the next day. Review the pickup time with them also. **Calling the day before gives the client peace of mind that they will get to their appointment. Please don't forget this essential step.**
- Most of our clients are elderly. They move slowly, so let the phone ring many times. If they have an answering machine, leaving them a message is okay. Do not leave your phone number.
- Many clients have Caller ID. To avoid having your number recorded, dial *67 before you dial their number. This will block your phone number. Not all clients have voicemail or message machines. If you have trouble getting through to them, or if their phone blocks blocked numbers, call the office. We will call them to confirm for you.

The Day of the Your Assignment:

- Arrive at the agreed upon time. If you get stuck in traffic, call the office and we will notify your client.
- Park a good foot away from the curb to make it easier for the client to get into your vehicle.
- **Clients must wear seat belts. It is the law.**
- **Do not talk on your cell phone or text while driving a client.**
- Our elderly clients may have hearing or eyesight problems. Try to face them when you speak and speak clearly. Don't assume they can see a curb, crack in the sidewalk or other obstacle. Point it out to them. Walk close to them or offer them your arm.
- Remember, **clients are not allowed to ask you for any extra things when you are taking them someplace.** Just tell them to call the office for help with whatever they request. The only exception is dropping a prescription off at the pharmacy after you have taken them to a doctor's appointment.
- **If your assignment is a trip to Philadelphia,** the client is responsible for all tolls and parking fees. If you have EZ Pass, they are to reimburse you.
- While you are doing a volunteer assignment, **please keep track of the time it takes you to complete it.** Count the time from the moment you leave your home through the time it would take you to go home when you complete an assignment. If you drop a client off and go run an errand before you return for them, you can deduct the time in between from your total time. Compiling this information is important to the process of securing funding for us from foundations and corporate sponsors.
- **If anything unexpected happens during an assignment, call the office immediately for assistance.** This very rarely happens, but we want you to know the office staff is here to help you. If you have a cell phone, program the office number (856-354-0298) into it so you will always have it handy. If you go to pick up a client and they don't answer the door, call the office. If a client falls or doesn't feel well, call the office.
- **Keep it confidential.** Many of our clients are very forthcoming about their lives. Their stories can be interesting and entertaining, even inspiring. Listen to them and enjoy their company, but remember your pledge of confidentiality and do not repeat what you hear.
- Clients may share sensitive information about their family situations. Be a good listener. That is all they need from you. **Please remember not to take sides or be judgmental.** Just as you want your family's privacy respected, so must you respect their family's privacy.
- If you hear anything that causes you to be concerned about a client's well-being, call the office and tell an IFC staff member. We will look into it and take appropriate action.

- If you need help or advice while on an assignment over the weekend or regarding a Monday morning assignment, leave a message on the office phone. We monitor the phones over the weekends and will get back to you as soon as possible.

After Your Assignment:

- Enter your assignment time and mileage into the system or call in or email it to us and we will put it in for you.
- **Give us your feedback. How did the assignment go? Was all the information we gave you accurate?**
- Go into the system to select another assignment or let us know when you are next available. We will be happy to give you your next assignment.

Let us know if anything changes. Got a new email address? Has your availability changed? Are you going away or do you need to be off the grid for a few weeks? Do you want to do different types of assignments? We urge you to try as many of the types of assignments Interfaith Caregivers offers as you can. Try companionship, telephone reassurance, or shopping for someone. You might really enjoy them. If you don't, you don't have to do them again.

Enjoy your volunteering!

Helping to keep an older or disabled person independent and actively involved in life is tremendously rewarding. And it doesn't take a lot of time to do! Our clients are very grateful for your help. They tell us all the time that they could not stay in their homes if it wasn't for the help they receive from Interfaith Caregivers volunteers. Enjoy your volunteering and thank you for joining Interfaith Caregivers!



ifchaddons.org

856-354-0298

P. O. Box 186 • Haddonfield, NJ 08033

Facilitating Independent Living
