



Making a Difference at Lake of the Woods

Volunteer Guidelines

www.lowlinc.org

Box 518

Locust Grove, VA 22508

**LOWLINC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization
with LOW neighbors helping their neighbors**



Thank you for your interest in becoming a LOWLINC volunteer. This document provides information about LOWLINC, the types of volunteer opportunities available, and some guidelines for volunteers. We look forward to welcoming you as a LOWLINC volunteer!

LOWLINC's MISSION

LOWLINC is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization dedicated to enabling seniors and those with physical and cognitive challenges who reside at Lake of the Woods to continue living fully and independently in their homes for as long as possible.

LOWLINC'S GOALS

To provide services to LOW residents who are seniors and/or have special needs through:

- *Referrals to existing community organizations;*
- *Delivery of reliable, cost-effective services provided by LOWLINC volunteers;*
- *Access to vetted service providers; and*
- *Social and educational programs.*

GOALS OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

- *To support the mission of LOWLINC by providing effective and quality services so LOW residents have the means and confidence to live safely and independently in their homes;*
- *To ensure volunteers have a pleasant and rewarding service experience;*
- *To nurture and build a "community of all ages" at LOW by involving volunteers of all ages with older LOW residents; and*
- *To provide opportunities for new friendships to develop among volunteers and members as they participate in social programs, share experiences, and discover mutual interests.*

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES WITH LOWLINC

Please bring your interests to LOWLINC! The best volunteers are those who enjoy sharing their knowledge, skills, and abilities

Transportation

What we offer LOWLINC members

- Round trip to and from errands, meetings and appointments

Volunteer drivers pick up members, drive them to appointments, meetings or errands, and then return them to their homes. Upon request, drivers will also assist members to and from their front door and will help carry groceries or packages into the member's house. Typical destinations include medical and dental offices, grocery stores, meetings, restaurants, and social and educational events in or near Lake of the Woods (LOW). *Rides are generally available to destinations up to 20 miles from LOW.* Members are responsible for payment of any parking fees or other related costs.

Drivers are needed for regularly scheduled trips, periodic trips, and last-minute trips. After the member calls or emails the LOWLINC coordinator to request transportation, the coordinator will contact a volunteer driver. *The volunteer will then call the member* to confirm arrangements.

Drivers are not required to have handicap accessible vehicles. If a volunteer driver vehicle is not available, or if the member uses a wheelchair or needs specialized assistance, the office staff will help identify a professional transportation provider for the member to call.

LOWLINC has arranged with Rappahannock Rapidan Community Services (RRCS) to have a wheelchair-accessible RRCS van parked at Lake of the Woods for service to the LOW community. This van is available to transport residents to and from medical and legal appointments. Driver training is available through RRCS.

Friendly Visitor: Companionship, Check-in Calls

What we offer LOWLINC members

- Check-in calls, and follow up if there's no answer
- Friendly visitor to chat with over a cup of coffee
- Reader, games

Social isolation is a common problem faced by people who live by themselves. At members' request, volunteers make a daily phone call to check on their well-being, or visit a member to read to them, play cards or chess, or simply to chat over a cup of coffee.

Home Services and Maintenance

What we offer LOWLINC members

- Changing light bulbs and smoke alarm batteries
- Home safety and maintenance checks
- Closet organization
- Organize “To Do” list and filing
- Water outdoor gardens or indoor house plants
- Offer gardening advice and plant repotting
- Help with light pruning and planting
- Handyman repairs
- Waiting for deliveries or other service personnel
- Occasional light exterior maintenance, e.g., leaf raking, mulching, snow shoveling

For each home service request, the LOWLINC coordinator contacts the volunteer, who then responds to the member’s request with a phone call to arrange the time for an in-person visit and the service. ***Home services are provided for occasional needs*** and are not intended to replace normal home-based services such as routine cleaning, a major fall leaf raking, power washing, or landscaping project.

Convenience Services and Errands

What we offer LOWLINC members

- Mail pick up
- Trash disposal at compactor
- Shopping
- Temporary pet care and dog walking
- Prescription / dry cleaning / laundry pick up and drop off
- Miscellaneous errands

Computer and Technology Assistance

What we offer LOWLINC members

- Setup, technical, and end user support for computers (Mac and PC), cell phones, tablets, DVDs, TVs, cable, and Internet services
 - Email
 - Internet searches and use
 - Assistance with CapSure
 - WiFi
 - Software installation
 - Hardware installation
 - Backup
 - Printers

- Assistance with online travel bookings, other reservations, and online shopping
- Setup and end user assistance for programmable
 - Thermostats
 - Light timers
 - Small appliances

Volunteers assist members to help deal with today's technology questions and issues. Volunteers also assist members understand how their computer works, how to use common software, and organize computer and email files.

Referrals to Vetted Service Providers

What we offer LOWLINC members

- Clearinghouse for recommended and vetted businesses and nonprofit service providers
- If desired, a warm handoff with a three-way phone conversation between the service provider, the member, and LOWLINC [Note: Members will make their own arrangements with service providers for service and fees.]
- Follow up that work was done well and at agreed upon price and quality

Members who need a paid service provider call the LOWLINC coordinator to request the names of vetted businesses or organizations. In addition, if a volunteer has tried to fill a member request and determines the scope of the request is beyond their comfort or skills, the volunteer contacts the LOWLINC coordinator to request a recommended commercial service provider. For example, if the member has requested someone to unclog a toilet, and the volunteer is unable to do so, the volunteer will inform the member, and the member will contact the office for additional guidance and assistance

Members who have received services provided by a preferred provider are asked to rate the service provided.

Social Outings, Events and Programs

What we offer LOWLINC members

- Attendance at LOW community events
- Book discussions
- Trips to local sites of interest
- Lectures and travelogues
- Panel discussions
- Restaurant outings

Volunteers plan, organize, and produce these social outings and get-togethers and are encouraged to suggest new programs and activities based on their own particular interests.

Administrative Support

Have you worked in a business office at some point in your career? Have you performed organizational and administrative tasks, and acquired skills that are essential to the functioning of an efficient organization? If so, we need your help.

Members contact the coordinator by phone and e-mail to discuss their needs and to request services, Monday through Friday, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. We would like to have one or two volunteers available to assist during business hours. Office volunteers are trained for their particular assignments, which may include:

- answering phones
- contacting members and volunteers to schedule appointments
- bookkeeping and filing
- processing forms and papers
- entering data into a database
- post-service follow-up with members (quality assurance checks)
- writing and editing

LOWLINC Committees

LOWLINC has formed a number of committees that oversee Membership, Volunteers, Communications, Preferred Providers, and Fundraising/Development. Joining a committee is a great way to use your skills and be involved “on the ground floor” in the development of LOWLINC, a new organization. Please contact one of the LOWLINC board members to discuss your interests.

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

Volunteer Background Checks

Due to the nature of the work done by volunteers as well as the requirements of our insurance policy, we conduct a criminal and sex offender background check of each volunteer.

Volunteer-First Policy

LOWLINC expects that about 80 percent of the services we deliver on a monthly basis will be provided by volunteers. The LOWLINC coordinator will make a judgment as to whether a requested service can be handled by a volunteer or whether it requires the expertise of a preferred provider.

General Expectations

Volunteers should adhere to the rules and policies of these Volunteer Guidelines. Working closely with the coordinator, volunteers are expected to:

- decline any gifts or tips that may be offered
- dress appropriately for the assignment
- attend orientation and training sessions
- consult with the coordinator or office staff before assuming new responsibilities
- be prompt and reliable in reporting for duty
- notify the volunteer coordinator as soon as possible when unable to report for a scheduled assignment
- maintain records of time and mileage
- protect confidential information
- exercise good judgment
- treat members and other volunteers with respect

Caveats

Volunteers may often come into close personal contact with LOWLINC members as they provide transportation, help with minor in-home repairs, work in yards, and offer technical expertise. ***Volunteers should avoid performing personal services that require close physical contact and should also be careful not to offer advice about a member's health or safety that is outside the volunteer's area of expertise.***

Privacy and Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a LOWLINC member or another volunteer. Such information should not be shared outside the organization during informal conversations with friends. Volunteers are required to sign LOWLINC's Volunteer Agreement.

When appropriate, LOWLINC collects personal information directly from the person concerned or with the knowledge and consent of that person. LOWLINC does not sell, rent, exchange, or share personal information for use by third parties in marketing or solicitations of any kind.

Representation of the Organization

Volunteers should not act on behalf of or make statements representing the official position of the organization, unless they have been authorized to do so by the LOWLINC coordinator or an officer of the Board of Directors. For example, volunteers should not make statements to the press or broadcast media without prior authorization. No volunteer is authorized to sign any agreement involving contractual or financial obligations.

Assignments

Volunteers will be asked to take on assignments that coincide with their particular interests and abilities, as well as the needs of the organization and its members. Volunteers are free to discuss a change in assignment at any time they feel a change is necessary or desirable.

Special-Case Volunteers

For special projects and activities, as deemed appropriate by the LOWLINC coordinator and Board of Directors, LOWLINC may accept volunteers participating in student community-service activities, Boy Scout projects, Girl Scout projects, student intern projects, church-related groups, and corporate volunteer programs. In these cases, an agreement must be in place with the organization, school, or program that identifies responsibility for the care and management of the volunteers.

Recordkeeping

Volunteers should keep a record of each time they perform an assignment for LOWLINC. Accurate and up-to-date records are important to both LOWLINC and the volunteer since they may be used as proof of tax deductions for gas and mileage to and from an assignment. In addition, volunteer time is used when applying for foundation or other grant monies.

Volunteer Recognition

Expressions of volunteer recognition will be conducted annually to highlight and reward the contributions of volunteers to the organization's programs. An ad hoc committee of Board may make recommendations for volunteer recognition to the full Board of Directors. Members of the Board who are also volunteers are not eligible to receive recognition for their volunteer service.

Extended Absences and Resignation

Volunteer assignments are not permanent. A volunteer may decide to stop volunteering at any time. Volunteers are asked to inform the LOWLINC office and to give as much notice as possible if it becomes necessary to interrupt the volunteer assignment for either a brief or an extended period of time. To help the organization grow and learn from its experiences, volunteers may be asked to complete an evaluation before leaving the volunteer program.

Termination

LOWLINC may dismiss a volunteer if he or she fails to fulfill the duties of the position and/or meet the basic standards of professionalism set by the organization and judged essential to its performance. Grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following: misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on duty, theft of property or misuse of the organization's equipment or materials, verbal or physical abuse of Members, and breach of our privacy or confidentiality policies or other LOWLINC policies and procedures.

Volunteer Driver Insurance

Volunteer drivers use their own insurance coverage when driving their own automobiles. In addition, LOWLINC has an umbrella liability insurance policy in place to provide additional coverage in the event of an accident. A copy of the volunteer's proof of **auto insurance must be on file in the LOWLINC office**. The volunteer driver's mileage is considered as a tax-deductible charitable contribution for income tax purposes. Parking fees that may be incurred should be paid by the member.

Volunteer service at LOWLINC should not become a burden. Volunteers should feel free to accept or decline particular assignments, depending upon their personal schedules and commitments. Volunteers may serve on a regular or periodic basis.

About This Document

The policies and procedures in this Volunteer Guidelines document are subject to change. We gratefully acknowledge the kind support of AHA (At Home in Alexandria) in sharing their Volunteer Handbook and other information about their "aging-in-community" village.

LOWLINC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

LOWLINC

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