

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What type of organization is The Village in Howard (TVIH)?

- TVIH is a private, non-profit membership organization that is classified as human service (IRS designation 501 (C) (3)).

How do I become a member?

- You must be age 55 or older and a resident of Howard County. Complete the membership form on our website or by mailing an application form to our PO Box 1276, Columbia, MD 21044. You can download and print the application form from our website www.thevillageinhoward.org and click on the **To Join Tab**; or call the office to request an application be sent to you; or email membership@thevillageinhoward.org with your request.

How do I pay for my membership?

- The online application permits payment by credit card, or you may mail in your check to TVIH PO Box 1276, Columbia, MD 21044, along with your application form.

What happens after I pay my membership fee?

- When the Membership Committee receives an application for a paid membership, a committee representative will contact you within one to two weeks and a “Buddy” will be assigned to help you become familiar with the Village.
- Each new member will be provided with a New Member Packet of information.
- You will be issued a user name and password to log onto the TVIH website, www.thevillageinhoward.org.
- As a member, you will have access to the member-only documents and membership-only web forums. You will be able to register yourself and guests for programs/events listed on the calendar. You may want to update your personal profile and check the list of personal interests. You have the option of uploading your photo to the membership directory.

What if one cannot afford the entire fee?

- The Village in Howard has established a membership support program (reduced fees) for Associate and Full Memberships. This support is available, subject to TVIH resources, to applicants meeting certain income requirements. TVIH has a limited number of supported memberships which can be offered. To seek additional information and apply, phone the TVIH Manager at 443-367-9043 for more information.

What personal information is shared with other members in the membership directory?

- You decide what information you wish to share (visibility) with other members. Go to your profile (upper right corner) on the website to make your choice. Most of our members choose to list their city, state, telephone numbers and email addresses in the member directory. However, if a member clicks on your specific name, your address will show, unless you specifically request it not be shown.

How do I find another member's phone number and email address?

- Logon to the website. Click on the green tab at the top labeled "Resources". Then, click on "Member Directory" in the dropdown menu. Click Search (do not fill in any fields). Scroll down below the map. If someone does not wish to share their address, email or phone number with other members, you will not find their information in the member directory.

If I join in the middle of a year, when is my membership renewal date?

- Your membership renewal date is one year from the date you begin membership.

I am an associate member now. If I need services in the future, can I switch to be a full-service member and pay the difference of the membership fees?

- Yes, and the incremental cost will be pro-rated based on your remaining time before renewal.

I am a full-service member, "How do I request services?"

- There are two ways to request a service:
 1. **Phone the Office** – 443-367-9043; If no one answers, leave a message with your request. If it is not clear or verification is required, an office volunteer will return your call.
 2. **Email the Office** – services@thevillageinhoward.org and provide the specifics of your request:
 3. **For Transportation Request** – PLEASE COMMUNICATE TRANSPORTATION REQUESTS AT LEAST 4 TO 5 DAYS PRIOR TO REQUIRED TRIP, IF POSSIBLE. THE GREATER THE ADVANCE NOTICE, THE GREATER THE CHANCE A VOLUNTEER WILL BE AVAILABLE.
 - Your Name
 - Date Request is Needed
 - Reason for Request
 - Pick Up Time
 - Appointment Time
 - Time to Return to Pick you up from your appointment
 - Time you will be Returned to your home
 - Destination Address
 4. **For Home Request** (Repair, Computer Help, Errands, Friendly Visit, etc.) date/time can be flexible and amicably-agreed upon by both the member and the volunteer.
 - Your Name
 - Date may/may not be required, until determined by both member and volunteer due to availability
 - Reason for Request
 - Time not required until determined by both member and volunteer
 - Address

5. Once the request is initiated in the system, available providers are contacted. As soon as a provider is 'selected', both the member and the volunteer receive a confirmation notification via email that includes all relevant contact information and Emergency Contacts. If the member does not have email access, the member will receive a confirmation phone call.
6. All requests depend on volunteer availability. A request is not automatically guaranteed to be fulfilled. We try our best to accommodate ALL requests; however, in the event we are unable to provide a volunteer, we will communicate such information to the member several days prior to the request date, to see if other arrangements can be made.
7. TVIH does not provide emergency services. If you have an emergency, call 911.

What other services does TVIH provide to a full-service member?

- Circle of Care – non-medical assistance after hospitalization; simple home maintenance; limited transportation to doctor, grocery, and running errands; friendly visits; computer assistance.

Are the TVIH Officers, Board Members and Committee Members all volunteers?

- Yes. Thousands of hours are donated by volunteers each year to keep TVIH running and expanding.

If most of the TVIH administrative work and services are done by volunteers, what is my membership fee used for?

- Membership fees cover approximately 40% of yearly expenses. The largest expenses are office rent, salaries and benefits for one part-time office manager and one contractual bookkeeper. The other large items are liability insurance policy, communications (telephone and internet) and off-site rental fees for activities. For a detailed financial report, read the most-recent TVIH Annual Report in the "Documents" library under the tab "Resources" on the website.

Do membership fees cover all the expenses?

- No. Membership fees cover less than 40% of the expenses of the Village. The remaining funds are currently raised by donations from individuals, businesses, grants and a few fundraising events per year. Fundraising is a necessary activity.

Does TVIH accept donations other than cash?

- Yes. Click on the 'Donate' tab on the website and follow the directions. Are donations to TVIH income tax deductible?
- Yes. IRS has determined TVIH is a charitable, tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) organization. All donations (not membership fees) are income tax deductible.

Are all the Village programs restricted to members only?

- Members may register a guest up to five times a year for each event that requires registration. Some programs such as Lunch Bunch and Sneakers and Coffee do not require registration. Usually, a registered-required event has a maximum capacity. If the

event capacity is filled, you may call the office (443-367-9043) and ask to be placed on a waiting list. You would be notified if a cancellation were to occur.

Will TVIH organize group trips?

- Occasionally, submit your group trip ideas by emailing the program committee at events@thevillageinhoward.org or by calling our office at 443-367-9043.

Can non-members serve as volunteers?

- Yes. Volunteer involvement is a cornerstone of the community. There are a broad range of opportunities for both member and non-member volunteers. As a community, it is important that members participate and share their skills with other members (for example, a member volunteer may be able to grocery shop for another member who is ill or run errands). More information for member and non-member volunteers is available on the website Volunteering page.
- All Board Members, Transportation Volunteers and Service Volunteers are fully vetted.

Does TVIH work with other senior villages nationally or locally?

- Yes. TVIH is a member of the Village-to-Village Network, a non-profit organization made up of approximately 300 senior villages in the country, and Washington Area Villages (WAVE). We learn and share our experiences and resources with other villages providing similar services to seniors.

Does TVIH have a list of vetted contractors?

- No. We utilize the “Contractor Referral” forum for members to request and receive referrals from other members.
- Presently, TVIH has FOUR Forums available, which are accessed via the following instructions:
 - Go to www.thevillageinhoward.org
 - On the Home Page, login as a member
 - Click on the FORUMS tab where you will find 4 Forums
 1. **TVIH UPDATES:** Board members, officers and committee chairs can communicate with members, allowing members to reply.
 2. **MEMBERS SHARING:** Any member can post community news that the member deems important. For example: new 55+community in Howard County in planning stages; tax credit for seniors, concerts and fairs not sponsored by TVIH.
 3. **CONTRACTOR REFERRAL:** For member referrals to vendors (plumbers, electricians, etc.), stores, merchandise, etc.
 4. **BUY, SELL & FREE:** All members can post to sell, buy or give away items.
 - Note: Before items are posted and communicated to members, all postings will be vetted (reviewed) within 24 hours on Mon. – Fri.