

The Village In Howard (TVIH)

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.

What is TVIH's address?

Our mailing address is PO Box 1276, Columbia, MD 21044. Applications, forms, dues, and donations can be securely sent there.

Our office, physical location, is located in the Stevens Forest Neighborhood Center at 6061 Stevens Forest Road, Columbia, MD 21045.

What are your office hours?

Monday through Friday, 10 AM to 2 PM. Our office manager and volunteers work in the office. Before you visit our office, call to make sure the office is open. (443-367-9043).

Is your office closed if there is a snow storm or similar situation?

Yes. Our policy is that if the Howard County Schools are closed for weather, etc., our office is closed on that day, and all activities of The Village are cancelled. If the start of public schools is delayed, office hours and activities will start at noon if possible. Our telephone line is open. You can leave a phone message on our voice mail. Our normal days of operation are determined by the Howard County Government's calendar, except Columbus Day and Veterans Day.

What are the member benefits?

For educational, cultural and recreational programs, we offer an Associate Membership (for \$150 per year). A Full Membership (for \$350 a year) enjoys the programs and receives services provided by member and non-member volunteers as requested.

There is a more extensive list of services on our website. Click on the tab “How to Join”.

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 (see above). You can download and print the application form from our website or pick up the form at the office.

How do I pay for my membership?

The online application permits payment by credit card, or you may mail in your check.

When the membership committee receives an application for an **associate membership** (see membership types above), the committee will check for age and address and send a message that you have been accepted and may now pay.

When the membership committee receives an application for a **full membership**, a member of the committee will contact you for an interview to determine our ability to provide services at the level you may need.

What happens after I pay my membership fee?

You will be issued a user name and password to log on to the TVIH website, www.thevillageinhoward.org.

As a member, you will have access to the member-only documents and member-only web forums. You will be able to register yourself and guests for 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 personal information is shared with other members in the membership directory?

You decide what information you want 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.

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

Log on to the website. Click on the green tab at the top labeled "Resources". Then click on "member directory" In the dropdown menu. You can find member information there. If your friend does not want to share address, email or phone number with other members, then you will not find the info 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?

You may call your request into the office (leaving a message if the office is not staffed), or you may log in to the Website as a member and click on the green tab "Resources" at the top. Click next on "Documents". You will see "Request services".

Does TVIH provide transportation service?

If you need transportation, your best options are Neighbor Ride or the public system Howard Transit which can also provide para-transit service. Neighbor Ride exclusively serves seniors through the services of more than 350 volunteer drivers. If however, you are a full service member and you do have a transportation need, TVIH has volunteer drivers to assist you. Send Email request or call our office at 443-367-9043.

Usually, at least **48 hours' notice** is required to schedule a ride. The greater the advance notice, the greater the chance a volunteer will be available. When a volunteer accepts a service assignment, both the member and the volunteer re-

ceive confirmation that includes all relevant contact information via e-mail. If the member does not have email access, the member will receive a confirmation phone call.

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

TVIH volunteers provide other services, of the “neighbor helping neighbor” type support.

I have a computer but do not use it often. Is there help available from TVIH to teach me how to navigate the TVIH website?

Yes. Call the office. We will arrange for a volunteer to give you a one-hour free lesson.

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?

The largest expenses are office rent, salaries and benefits for one part-time office manager and one part-time 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 2015 TVIH annual report in the “Documents” under the tab “Resources”.

Do membership fees cover all the expenses?

No. Membership fees cover less than half of the expenses of the Village. The remaining funds are currently raised by donations from individuals, businesses, grants and one or two fund-raising events per year. Fundraising is a necessary activity. As more seniors join TVIH, the membership fees will cover a greater proportion of The Village in Howard costs.

Does TVIH accept donations other than cash?

Yes. Please call us by phone or send us an email. A member of our fundraising committee will contact you.

Are donations to TVIH income tax deductible?

Yes. IRS has determined that TVIH is a charitable, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. All donations (not membership fees) are income tax deductible.

Where do our members live?

Currently, 65% Columbia, 30% Ellicott City, 5% Elsewhere, (Clarksville, Elkridge, Laurel)

What are some of the characteristics of Village members?

We have 121 members (as of October 1, 2016). Ninety-five are associate members and 26 are full service members.

Our Mean age is 75.3, and the range is from 58 to 86 (Estimate from a sample), with 70% of our population between 68 and 78.

60% of our members are couples, and some of the remaining 40% who are individual members may have a non-member spouse.

What are the reasons why our members have joined?

“I am interested in staying in my home and meeting interesting older people with various backgrounds.”

“Aging in Place is a good concept. I like to meet new friends.”

“I like the community, and the assistance from other members.”

“As I became better acquainted with some wonderful people, I wanted to join to continue enjoying their friendship”

“I like the concept of reciprocity during the aging process, and I have discovered that warm and interesting people share my view.”

“I love the concept of older people working together to address the challenges in their lives.”

“I joined for companionship and meeting smart, positive, and problem-solving people.”

“I moved to MD three years ago. I joined to meet new friends of my age, and to explore the neighborhoods by going to events organized by TVIH.”

Are all the Village programs restricted to members only?

Members may register for up to 2 guests for each event that requires registration. Some programs such as Lunch Bunch and The Sneakers and Coffee group do not require registration.

I am interested in going to the operas, will TVIH organize group trips to opera performances?

Submit your request by emailing the program committee (events@thevillagein-howard.org) or by calling our office. The program committee will look into details of organizing such a program. You may also join the “Program Ideas” forum, restricted to members only, and send an email to this forum to see if other members are also interested in this activity.

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. The lists of referred electricians, painters, window cleaners, HVAC, computer services, plumbers, gutter cleaners, snow removers, auto repairs, pest control and tree services are available on the forum.

Can non-members serve as volunteers?

Yes.

Does TVIH work with other senior villages in the DC area?

Yes. TVIH is a member of the Village to Village Network (VtVnetwork.org), a non-profit organization made of 365 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.