

Visiting Buddies Volunteer Visitor Program

Volunteer Information



The **Well-Being HUB Visiting Buddies Program** (Visiting Buddies) serves community members from Lake Echo to Ecum Secum, and through the Musquodoboit Valley. The aim of Visiting Buddies is to address isolation amongst older adults, which is shown to negatively impact health in a variety of ways, both physically and mentally. Having access to support in the form of a volunteer visitor can help connect clients to services they need, reduces isolation, and lengthens the time individuals can remain in their homes and in their communities.

Through this program, isolated older adults are matched with volunteers who visit them in their homes and/or in the community, depending on the client's needs. If needed, pairs (volunteer & client) have access to MusGo Rider for transportation support during visits. Gas cards are also available to support volunteers' transportation to visits.

Volunteer Role & Responsibilities

The volunteer visits the client in their home or in the community for **two to three hours per week** for a **period of six months**, with the option to extend if volunteer resources are available.

Visits are primarily social, and can include:

- outings
- doing an activity at the client's home
- providing accompaniment for errands
- providing navigation support and connecting to required resources, etc.

Visits do not include:

- housework, cooking, or other related tasks
- providing personal care
- providing financial support.

Volunteers and clients will decide on a visit schedule that works for both, which can change from week to week depending on the client's needs and the volunteer's availability. Volunteers can use their own vehicles to transport their match for outings and/or errands, given that they have the required insurance coverage. Otherwise, our local community transportation service, MusGo Rider, can be booked for outings and errands that the client needs accompaniment for.

Volunteers will submit a monthly report on their activities which will include:

- how many visits they attended and for how long each time
- the distance driven for volunteer activities
- needs of clients they have identified, concerns, etc.

For more information, contact Lesley Magee, Well-Being HUB Project Coordinator at 902-889-2735 or wellbeinghubs@gmail.com.

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Volunteer Application Process

Potential volunteers are vetted through the submission of an application and an interview, if selected. Applicants who are selected to be volunteers are required to provide a Vulnerable Sector Check before they are matched. The cost of the Vulnerable Sector Check can be covered by the Old School or reimbursed to the new volunteer.

Information collected through the application and interview will help determine the match and includes:

- Personal interests & hobbies
- Professional experience
- Preferred times for visits
- Languages spoken
- Ownership of a vehicle
- Location and how far the volunteer is willing to travel.

Once the potential volunteer applies, they will be contacted by the Well-Being HUB Project Coordinator to schedule an interview.

Orientation

Before being matched, all volunteers will attend an orientation session. This may occur in a group with other volunteers or may be a one-on-one meeting with the Project Coordinator. The orientation will include:

- an overview of the program
- a review of volunteer responsibilities & expectations
- a discussion of contractual obligations related to the safety of clients in volunteer visiting context.

On-going support & resources available to volunteers

- Access to training and information sessions on topics like:
 - fraud prevention
 - benefits & resources available to low-income older adults
 - signs, symptoms and supports for older adults living with dementia
 - supporting technology use with older adults
 - community resources
 - empathic communication, among others
- Staff support in solving challenges, overcoming barriers and connecting to resources.

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