



Senior Chore Service Volunteer Handbook

*Thank you for your willingness to volunteer for the **Senior Chore Service**.
Your efforts will contribute to making our community a better place. This handbook provides
information that will help prepare you for your time as a volunteer.*

1. Overview of the Senior Chore Service

(a) History

Since 1973, the Pullman Community Council on Aging (PCCoA), a group of caring citizens and professionals, has advocated for Pullman's senior citizens. In the ensuing years, PCCoA has: offered Pullman Meals on Wheels seven days a week, 365 days a year; created the Guide to Senior Services in Whitman County in 1999, along with subsequent updated issues, which are distributed free; established regular opportunities for seniors to receive foot care through the creation of McQuarrie Fund Foot Care Clinics in 2008. The Senior Chore Service was established in December 2012.

The Council has also been instrumental in the establishment of Council on Aging and Human Services, enabling Whitman County to receive federal and state monies for seniors; building of and continuing support for HUD housing for seniors; support for Pullman's Senior Center, with a professional director and dedicated city-owned space; ongoing partnership with WSU's Center for Civic Engagement, as well as other university programs/research that work with seniors.

(b) Services Offered

Services provided by the Senior Chore Service include:

- Outdoor: Yard cleanup Leaf raking Periodic Yard Maintenance
 Snow Shoveling Light home maintenance and repair (outdoor)
- Indoor: Indoor cleaning Re-arranging furniture Flipping Mattresses
 Packing items for storage Light home maintenance and repair (indoor)
 Computer assistance Meal Preparation Companionship
- Other: Moving items to another location Running errands
 Entertainment (e.g., attending concerts, movies, etc.)

(c) Legal and Health Considerations for Volunteers

PCCoA carries liability insurance for volunteers, which covers acts of negligence which occur while performing duties assigned to you as a volunteer. This includes injury to your client, accusation of wrongdoing, or damage to a client's property due to volunteer's negligence.

To assure the safety of the vulnerable population we serve, a Washington State Patrol background check, one reference, volunteer application completely filled out, and a short orientation are required.



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In consideration of your client's health, as well as your own, proper sanitary procedures should be used while in the client's home. Proper hand washing with soap and water should be done when you arrive and before you leave. If you are ill, you should always re-schedule your appointment rather than risk infecting the client. Disposable gloves are available in our office. Please use them if you are performing any chores which might bring you in contact with body fluids, including cleaning chores. Remember that open, uncovered wounds are the most direct route for infectious organisms to enter the body, so keep cuts and open wounds covered at all times.

Dishes should be washed in hot, soapy water, rinsed with running hot water, and allowed to air dry. One or two tablespoons of bleach may be added to the soapy water as a disinfectant; soak dishes in bleach solution for at least 30 seconds.

(d) Services Not Offered

Senior Chore Service cannot provide:

- ♦ financial, legal, or medical advice or assistance of any kind
- ♦ skilled labor, such as major electrical or plumbing repairs
- ♦ home renovation services
- ♦ automobile repair
- ♦ small business assistance
- ♦ transportation

2. Nurturing a Culture of Caring -- Gatekeepers

The ultimate goal of the Senior Chore Service is to build and sustain a culture of caring within the Pullman community for its seniors. We place a high value on respect for elders and others with disabilities. We believe in the right to dignity and independence for all people.

Volunteers with Senior Chore Service serve a vital "gatekeeping" function with our seniors. Gatekeepers are those who can open the gates between vulnerable people and the social service agencies that can help them. By learning to recognize danger signals, as discussed below, you can prevent seniors from ending up in difficult or even dangerous conditions, socially, medically, or physically.

Feel free to spread the word about the Senior Chore Service. If you know a senior who may benefit from the service, tell him or her about it. If you know of individuals or groups who would be good volunteers, let them know about available opportunities. Ultimately, remember that the time you spend volunteering with a Pullman senior will have a ripple effect of making our community an even better place.

3. Interacting with Seniors

(a) Communication

Hearing impairment, memory issues, poor health can all make communication difficult for some seniors. You may have to speak more slowly and louder than you



normally would. It may take longer for them to process what you are saying; do your best to be patient and understanding. If you are frustrated with them, they may pull back and disengage.

Basic communication skills always help:

- Listen carefully, with your focus on the senior
- Use non-verbal communication effectively (nodding, gesturing, smiling, etc.)
- Speak clearly and non-quickly, although you do not need to exaggerate your words overly slowly.
- Be present, patient, and engage.

GATEKEEPER FUNCTION: sudden changes in the senior's ability to communicate should be brought to the attention of the SCS Coordinator.

(b) Respecting Differences

Every person is a unique individual. While you may find you have many similarities to the senior with whom you volunteer, you will have differences as well. You may share different beliefs, values, and personality traits. You may share different religious and cultural backgrounds. Please respect and find ways to honor these differences. You will likely find that you learn more about yourself as you learn about the other person.

Clients have the right to make their own choices about the way they live. It is not our job as helpers to impose our standards on others.

GATEKEEPER FUNCTION: If you are uncomfortable with a client's situation, however, or if you notice health or safety hazards, or a sudden change in the client's personality or disposition, notify the SCS Coordinator.

If there doesn't seem to be enough food to eat, heat in the winter, or a means to heat the food, please contact the Coordinator *immediately*. We'll notify an emergency contact and make appropriate referrals.

(c) Depression/Loneliness

While it may be a stereotype that many seniors struggle with depression and loneliness, it is true that most seniors have experienced significant losses.

As we age we likely lose friends, loved ones, physical abilities, and cognitive functioning. Many people struggle with adapting to these changes, which can lead to a persistently depressed mood that may develop into major depression.

Signs of depression include a persistently depressed mood, irritability, difficulty sleeping or excessive sleeping, increased distractibility or difficulty concentrating, sudden changes in weight, loss of pleasure, loss of motivation, and changes in appetite.

GATEKEEPER FUNCTION: if the senior you are working with is experiencing a number of these symptoms and you are concerned that he or she may be experiencing depression, please notify the SCS Coordinator.

Loneliness may occur if a senior has lost their spouse or a close friend/support network. We have all dealt with loneliness at one time or another. As a volunteer, you are in a position to ease a senior's loneliness by being a supportive friend and



companion. You may also be in a position to suggest activities the senior may benefit from to ease his or her loneliness. The PCCoA's Guide to Senior Services is a great resource for seniors.

(d) Accepting/Giving Gifts

All Senior Chore Services are provided free of charge through volunteers. It is a way for our community to value its seniors through time and service.

Many seniors will want to reciprocate your service through gifts or payment. Accepting payment would change the nature of the volunteer relationship and is therefore not allowed. If a senior is adamant about offering payment, inform him or her that the services are provided free of charge, but that a donation may be made to the Senior Chore Service. The Senior Chore Service is a program of the Pullman Community Council on Aging, which is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit; donations are tax-deductible.

If a senior offers you a small token thank-you gift, it may be appropriate to accept it. This may include an offer of homemade food or a craft item. Use your best judgment as to the appropriateness of accepting the gift and avoid creating an expectation of reciprocity for your volunteer time.

4. Responsibilities of a Volunteer

(a) Confidentiality

The principle of confidentiality is basic to the maintenance of professional ethics and community respect. All staff and volunteers of the Pullman Community Council on Aging (PCCoA) have a set of ethical responsibilities by which they are bound. PCCoA clients act in good faith, expecting their circumstances and personal matters to remain confidential. All paid staff and volunteers of PCCoA will take responsibility for protecting the confidentiality of all clients.

- ⊙ All written and unwritten information concerning clients of the PCCoA is considered to be confidential.
- ⊙ All **Senior Chore Service** recipients are clients of the PCCoA and any information about them may be shared only with appropriate staff at PCCoA or emergency personnel (see below).

(b) Commitment

- ⊙ Once an appointment has been scheduled with a client, please contact him/her within three days. Call again on the appointment day, or if you need to cancel or reschedule. If you have not yet met the client and need to cancel, please call the SCS Coordinator instead to make the changes.
- ⊙ If your schedule or availability to volunteer changes significantly, please notify the Senior Chore Coordinator.
- ⊙ Do not bring another volunteer or family member along to your appointment without the client's/SCS permission.



(c) Boundaries

- ⦿ A goal of the SCS is to build and strengthen a network of support for our seniors. As a volunteer you are one part of that network. If you are feeling stretched in your ability to serve, or you feel that the senior may benefit from additional help, talk to the SCS Coordinator about additional services or resources that may be available.
- ⦿ Decide on your limits as a volunteer and discuss them with the Senior Chore Coordinator and the senior. This includes your available time, the types of tasks you are comfortable performing, and level of supervision (e.g., one-on-one vs. group projects). When you meet with the client, discuss the agreed upon tasks and the amount of time you have to give. Remind the client if necessary.
- ⦿ Also, remember that it is ok to say no if you feel that you have reached your limit as a volunteer. We would like you to remain healthy and happy with your volunteer commitment. Other resources are available for clients who need more than we can provide.

(d) Appropriate Attire

Please dress in a manner that is appropriate to your volunteer duties. Do not wear clothing that communicates disrespect, or messages/images of an explicit nature about drugs, alcohol, sex, or foul language. If you will be performing manual labor, be sure to wear close-toed shoes, dress for the weather, and wear clothing that you do not mind getting dirty. Bring work gloves if you will be doing yard work.

Those serving individually in a client's home will be issued a SCS Volunteer ID card. Be sure to wear/carry this ID card each time you serve, assuring the senior(s) you are part of our program.

(e) Reporting your experience and hours of service

Please keep track of the days and times in which you volunteer, as instructed by the SCS Coordinator. We are grateful for your time and would like to have an accurate record of your volunteering. Since we are funded in part through grants, we also need to provide accurate information about our impact on the community.

The Volunteer Time Report includes a place to share about your volunteer experience. We would like to be able to highlight the positive things our volunteers are doing for local seniors. In the unfortunate event that the experience has been challenging or difficult, please contact the SCS Coordinator immediately, so that we can work towards improving the situation.

(f) Drugs and Alcohol

Please do not consume drugs or alcohol prior to, or during your volunteer duties. If you believe you have a problem with drugs or alcohol, please consider contacting the Palouse River Counseling Center at (509) 334-1133, www.palouserivercounseling.org.



(g) Scenarios

To help you prepare for volunteering, please read the following scenarios and consider how you would respond to the given situations. While you may not encounter any of these situations, they are designed to get you thinking about how you might handle a challenging situation. If you have questions, please discuss the scenario with the SCS Coordinator.

- 1) You arrive at Barbara's house for your weekly volunteering and she does not answer the door. You hear her call out for you to come in. You find her sitting upright on the floor. She has fallen and hasn't been able to pull herself up. [see section 5.b.]
- 2) You have been volunteering weekly with Bob. He is generally well-groomed and cheerful. You've noticed that lately he appears disheveled and seems irritable and disoriented. He doesn't seem to want to talk about it. [see section 3.c.]
- 3) You visit Doris for the first time and notice that her apartment is very cluttered. There are many boxes and piles of magazines and newspaper, such that she only has very narrow pathways to go from room to room with her walker. You are concerned about her safety. [see section 5.d.—pt 6.]
- 4) You've just finished raking the leaves from Jack and Harriet's yard. Jack tells you what a good job you've done as he hands you twenty dollars. [see section 3.d.]

5. Health and Safety Issues

(a) First Aid

The SCS office is stocked with basic First Aid supplies to care for cuts, bruises, sunburn, and other minor injuries that may occur while you are volunteering. We encourage every volunteer to take measures to prevent injuries, to carry drinking water when working outdoors, apply sunscreen if working in the sun, etc.

(b) Health Emergencies

If you are unable to rouse the client, he cannot move or speak, or has fallen and isn't able to stand without assistance, **DO NOT MOVE THE CLIENT**. Your judgment will dictate your response to each situation. If the client resumes normal behavior in a few minutes, and his life is not in danger, call the SCS Coordinator to pass along your concerns.

If you or the senior with whom you are volunteering are in immediate danger or are experiencing a health emergency, call 911. Emergency responders can be instructed to do an initial check before deciding whether to take someone to the Emergency Room. The client may refuse further care at that point. Always call the SCS Coordinator as soon as possible. She has emergency contact information for each client and can alert them to the situation.

(c) Sexual Harassment *(from Washington State Human Rights Commission website)*

Sexual harassment is unwelcome or unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors. It can also be some kind of sexual action that is aimed at someone



because of the person's sex. This action can be verbal, physical, or visual and subtle or obvious. It can also include conduct that is not sexual in nature but is gender-related. Sexual harassment includes the harassment of the same, or of the opposite, sex. The kind of actions that could be considered sexual harassment takes many forms. Actions like pinching, grabbing, patting, touching someone else can be considered sexual harassment. Sexual harassment can also include;

- Repeated requests for dates
- Comments or questions about someone's body or sexual activities
- Displays of pornographic materials
- Assault or even rape
- Embarrassing stories or "jokes"
- Indecent exposure

If you believe you are a victim of sexual harassment in your volunteer position, please notify the Senior Chore Service Coordinator. If you are in a situation in which you feel you are in immediate danger, please call 911 and contact the SCS Coordinator as soon as possible.

(d) Reporting Concerns

If you have reason to believe that the senior with whom you are volunteering is a victim of abuse or neglect (e.g., physical abuse, sexual abuse, theft, financial exploitation, bullying and withholding basic necessities of life), please report your concerns to the Senior Chore Program Coordinator. If you have pressing concerns, you may file a report with Adult Protective Services by calling 1-800-459-0421 or (509) 568-3086.

Abuse/Neglect Examples and definitions of abuse and neglect:

(from the Washington Department of Social and Health Services website)

1. Physical abuse is intentional bodily injury. Some examples include slapping, pinching, choking, kicking, shoving, or inappropriately using drugs or physical restraints.
2. Sexual abuse is nonconsensual sexual contact (any unwanted sexual contact). Examples include unwanted touching, rape, sodomy, coerced nudity, sexually explicit photographing.
3. Mental mistreatment or emotional abuse is deliberately causing mental or emotional pain. Examples include intimidation, coercion, ridiculing, harassment, treating an adult like a child, isolating an adult from family, friends, or regular activity, use of silence to control behavior, and yelling or swearing which results in mental distress.
4. Exploitation occurs when a vulnerable adult or his/her resources or income are illegally or improperly used for another person's profit or gain. Examples include illegally withdrawing money out of another person's account, forging checks, or stealing things out of the vulnerably adult's house.
5. Neglect occurs when a person, either through his/her action or inaction, deprives a vulnerable adult of the care necessary to maintain the vulnerable adult's physical or mental health. Examples include not providing basic items such as food, water, clothing, a safe place to live, medicine, or health care.



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6. Self-neglect occurs when a vulnerable adult fails to provide adequately for themselves and jeopardizes his/her well-being. Examples include a vulnerable adult living in hazardous, unsafe, or unsanitary living conditions or not having enough food or water.

7. Abandonment occurs when a vulnerable adult is left without the ability to obtain necessary food, clothing, shelter or health care. Examples include deserting a vulnerable adult in a public place or leaving a vulnerable adult at home without the means of getting basic life necessities.

6. Community Senior Resources

Pullman Community Council on Aging

Senior Chore Service Coordinator (509) 332-9627

Pullman Meals on Wheels (509) 339-4000

www.PullmanCCoA.org

PullmanSrChores@gmail.com

PullmanComCOA@gmail.com

Rural Resources Community Action (509) 332-1517

www.ruralresources.org

Council on Aging and Human Services (509) 397-4305

www.coa-hs.org

Pullman Senior Center

(509) 338-3307

www.pullman-wa.gov/departments/parks-a-recreation/senior-center--active-adults



Name _____

Date _____

THE SCS COORDINATOR WILL REVIEW THIS FORM WITH YOU AT YOUR ORIENTATION

**Senior Chore Service
Volunteer Orientation Acknowledgement**

Pullman Community Council on Aging's Senior Chore Service (SCS) provides a helping hand for Pullman seniors in their homes, upon their request. The services are provided by volunteers, at no cost to the recipients. The following checklist is to ensure that you have received the appropriate orientation to our program.

- I have read and understood the contents of the Volunteer Handbook
- Program purpose and scope
- Confidentiality
- Infectious Disease
- Respecting Differences
- Accepting/giving gifts
- If you are unable to keep apptmt
- Setting limits/boundaries
- Attire, Volunteer ID Card
- Reporting your hours of service & why
- Gatekeeper Functions
- Grievance procedures for clients/volunteers
- Harassment policy
- other: _____

I have received information about and agree to abide by the guidelines established by Senior Chore Service regarding the importance of confidentiality, the provision of insurance for me, the infectious disease policy, and gatekeeper functions. I understand that as a SCS volunteer I am bound by the same rules of professional ethics as the PCCoA and SCS Board Members and staff, and that a breach of such ethics may result in my termination as a volunteer.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature if volunteer is under age 18

Date

Print Name (parent/guardian)

Senior Chore Service Coordinator Signature

Date