

“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.”
Elizabeth Andrew

“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. When you volunteer, you vote every day
about the kind of community you want to live in.”
Author Unknown

“I can no other answer make but thanks, and thanks.”
Shakespeare



Thank you for volunteering with Neighborhood Falmouth.



Neighborhood Falmouth
P.O. Box 435 | 20 Academy Lane, Unit 3
Falmouth MA 02540
508-564-7543
www.neighborhoodfalmouth.org



Neighborhood Falmouth Volunteer Handbook

Neighborhood Falmouth, Inc. is a community-based membership organization whose mission is to provide information and services that will help members live independently, safely, and comfortably in their own homes for as long as possible.

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Executive Director
Susan Loucks
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director@neighborhoodfalmouth.org

Coordinator of Volunteers
Laura Sonnichsen
508-737-2390
laurasneighborhood@gmail.com

- Choose only the type of service you enjoy; we want your work with Neighborhood Falmouth to be enjoyable.
- Tell the office if you plan to be out of the loop for a while – vacations are allowed!

Scheduling:

- After getting the go-ahead for a request, contact the person right away. Calling again the night before is always a good idea.
- With the member, choose the actual time you will pick the member up; you both will need to take into account the driving time to get to the appointment.
- Be on time for pickup and meet the member at their door. Please walk with them to their appointment.
- For appointments, be prepared to wait for the member or to return when needed.
- Let the office know as soon as possible if you cannot meet an obligation.

Extra or Unusual Requests:

- If a member makes a request beyond the one requested, you can agree or decline, based on your schedule or comfort level. If you do provide additional services, please let the Coordinator know, as we keep statistics on our services.
- If you do perform an extra request and it adds significantly to the time or complexity of a trip, email the details to the office after the request is filled.
- If an extra trip is obviously too complex, decline but suggest that the member makes a separate request and perhaps help them do it; notify the office.
- If a household request turns out to be more than you are able or comfortable with, you can decline and refer the member to the office to consult the list of approved vendors.

Feedback:

- If there are any concerns about a member's well-being, please let the NF office know. The health and safety of members is paramount. Volunteers have ongoing, in-person contact with members and can often spot any changes or behaviors of concern.

About Neighborhood Falmouth

Neighborhood Falmouth (NF) is a community-based membership organization whose goal is to help Seniors remain in their homes as long as possible and stay active in their communities. Neighborhood Falmouth, (a registered charitable 501(c)(3) organization), opened its doors in 2009 and is part of the Village-to-Village Network founded on Beacon Hill in 2001. We serve Seniors aged 50+ in the town of Falmouth.

Using a dedicated volunteer corps, Neighborhood Falmouth helps members:

- get the rides they need to appointments and shopping,
- get friendly assistance with life-management issues,
- feel safe and confident in their homes,
- gain access to professional advice and services for hire, and
- have opportunities for social activities and community offerings.

Our volunteers are essential to the mission of Neighborhood Falmouth.





Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- **How much time do I have to commit?** You are a valued volunteer so you decide this. There are no expectations for the amount of time or number of trips. We are grateful for your participation in any amount.
- **How do I deal with a request for an extra stop during a run?** Your comfort level or time schedule should determine this. You are not obliged to perform extra stops. If the request does not add significantly to the run, volunteers often agree to simple requests. Please notify the office of extra stops for record-keeping purposes.
- **What if I am offered money or a gift?** Please refuse all offers of money or gifts. Accepting a gift of baked goods is fine.
- **What if I don't have use email?** No problem! We can put you on the telephone list. The Coordinator will periodically call you or you can arrange to call and hear of open requests.
- **What if I am uncomfortable with driving members?** You are still needed even if you do not want to drive members. We have many requests for other types of assistance, like friendly visits, walking with a member, check-in calls, etc.
- **Do I need special insurance for my car when driving members?** No. Neighborhood Falmouth's insurance covers volunteers when driving, or anytime you are with a member on NF business. The policy provides additional coverage on top of your own insurance.
- **Do I need to be available on weekends?** No. We normally provide services on weekdays, though occasionally we field evening or weekend requests for community and cultural events.
- **Can I get reimbursement for mileage or get a record of miles driven for income tax purposes?** We do not provide reimbursement but can provide a record of the number of rides you have done each year. If you need actual mileage, you will need to keep those records yourself.
- **What if I have a change of plans after I have agreed to fill a request?** We understand. Just let the Coordinator know as soon as possible.
- **What if I observe a change in a member's health status or something dangerous in their home?** Please notify the office as soon as possible. The health and safety of our members is important to us.

What Volunteers Do For NF Members

While the majority of requests are for transportation, Neighborhood Falmouth also receives many requests for light home maintenance needs and for help with electronic devices.

A typical week of requests at NF might include:

Taking a walk with a member, sorting and reading mail, numerous rides to medical appointments and food shopping, taking out the weekly trash and recycling bins, driving members to weekly hair appointments, reading to a member with vision problems tightening the screws on an attic door, taking a member to the Senior Center for an exercise class, taking another member to her twice-weekly bridge games, bringing members to the monthly member-volunteer lunch gathering, changing smoke detector batteries, moving lawn furniture, making a wellness call in advance of bad weather, bringing lunch to a member newly home from the hospital, helping with trimming bushes, giving help with a computer, taking members to their rehab appointments, and more!

In addition, volunteers can:

- Share their interests, knowledge, and skills with the organization, through a planned program, or
- Provide administrative assistance in the NF office, including helping with the phones, planning events, filing, writing for the newsletter, etc.

Since 2010, Neighborhood Falmouth volunteers have fulfilled more than 5,000 member requests, with more than 1,700 requests fulfilled in 2014. Even with all this activity, our volunteers tell us again and again how rewarding it is for them to spend time with and serve Neighborhood Falmouth Seniors.

How the Process Works

It's easy to become a Neighborhood Falmouth volunteer. It starts with a face to face meeting with the Executive Director and the Coordinator of Volunteers. All prospective volunteers are given and must pass a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) background check. Once approved, the volunteer receives orientation information, a Volunteer Handbook, and an NF Volunteer name badge. As an NF volunteer, you are an active part of the organization and are welcome and encouraged to participate in monthly events and activities that bring members and volunteers together socially.

- A member calls the NF Office to request a service.
- The call is logged and forwarded via email to the Coordinator of Volunteers.

- The Coordinator integrates the new request into a rolling list of open requests. Two or three times a day, the Coordinator broadcasts the open request list via email to all volunteers. Volunteers without email are telephoned when needed. Look for the most recently sent broadcast for the most up to date request list.

A sample open request might look like this:

- **Monday, January 2**
- Jane Doe: 123 Home Street, East Falmouth
- Ride to Dr. Stayhealthy in Homeport 1:00 pm appt.
- Phone: 508-123-4567

The times broadcast in the email are appointment times, with occasional pickup time noted.

- Choose one or several open requests; it's up to you. Simply email the Coordinator with an offer to fulfill your chosen request(s). To keep extra emails to a minimum, don't reply to the broadcast if you are not available.
- If the request has not been filled by someone else, the Coordinator will confirm you as the volunteer, and give you the go-ahead to contact the member. Please do not contact the member regarding a request without first receiving confirmation from the Coordinator.
- Once your offer has been confirmed, please call the member as soon as possible and make arrangements, including pickup times. Don't forget to take into account the driving time to get to the appointment.
- On the day before performing the service, please call the member again to confirm, as plans or appointments might have changed.
- When the date and time arrive, carry out the request as planned.

Guidelines for Volunteers

General:

- Please wear your NF name badge.
- Introduce yourself as a volunteer for Neighborhood Falmouth, assuming the role of a representative of the organization with your courtesy and graciousness.
- Choose as many requests as you wish; there is no minimum or maximum number per week or month.