



Senior Companion Program is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

InterFaith Works of Central New York, through education, service and dialogue, affirms the dignity of each person and every faith community and works to create relationships and understanding among us.



Senior Companion Program

Senior Companions are volunteers, age 55 and over, who assist elders who have difficulty with daily living tasks, 15 to 40 hours per week, so they can remain living independently. Senior Companions also give family caregivers time off from their duties to run errands or see friends.

Senior Companions support our elders in many ways, including:

- Providing companionship and friendship
- Taking meals together
- Accompanying them to community events
- Providing transportation to medical appointments

Senior Companions receive orientation and training, supplemental accident and liability insurance, and meals while on duty. They also receive a small tax-free hourly stipend if they meet certain income guidelines.



InterFaith Works' Senior Companion Program

- For less than \$2,000 a year, IFW is able to provide critical, in-home companionship that allows vulnerable older adults to age in place and with dignity.
- In 2016, 58 Companions served 60,000 hours and reached 186 clients in Onondaga, Cayuga, and Madison Counties.



- A network of 10 area agencies – including PACE-CNY, Christopher Community, and the Salvation Army – support Companion services to their clients.



The **Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)** is the federal agency that supports Senior Corps, which includes the Senior Companion Program, the Foster Grandparent Program and RSVP, well as other national service programs including AmeriCorps.

10 Reasons to Support the Senior Companion Program

1. **Senior Companions Affirm Dignity:** Senior Companions allow frail elders and other vulnerable older adults to stay in their homes, where they can age in place and with dignity.
2. **Small Program, Big Impact:** In 2016, 58 Companions served 60,000 hours and reached 186 clients in Onondaga, Cayuga, and Madison Counties.
3. **A Unique Service:** Senior Companions offer friendship and socialization, share meals, engage in hobbies, and encourage socialization and activity. Home aides and other paid caregivers are often prohibited from doing these activities.
4. **Benefits to the Volunteer:** Senior Companions are low-income adults over the age of 55. They commit 15-40 hours per week to serve their clients. They receive a small stipend and mileage reimbursement for their service. Studies show that this kind of meaningful volunteer service can improve overall health and well-being for older adults.
5. **Long-term, Supportive Relationships:** Senior Companions visit their clients several times a week, every week. These friendships can last for years. Senior Companions become the eyes and ears for family, and are often the first to notice when an elders' needs have changed.
6. **Services are Free:** There is no cost to have a Senior Companion. Any frail elder or vulnerable older adult who would benefit from having a Senior Companion visit them is eligible for the service.
7. **Cost-Effective In-Home Care:** InterFaith Works spends approximately \$2,000 per client per year to provide weekly Senior Companion visits. By comparison, the average annual cost for home health care in Central New York is \$54,000 (www.genworth.com), and nursing home care costs more than \$100,000 (www.health.ny.gov).
8. **Ongoing Volunteer Training:** Senior Companions receive 40 hours of pre-service training, and attend monthly training sessions thereafter. Senior Companions learn about topics like independent living skills, falls prevention, mental health, heart care, dementia and Alzheimer's, and caregiver support. They also learn about community resources that enhance their clients' health and well-being.



9. **Community Partnerships:** InterFaith Works collaborates with 10 area agencies – including PACE-CNY, Christopher Community, Syracuse Jewish Family Service, and the Salvation Army – to support companion services to their clients.

10. **Caregivers Receive Respite:** Senior Companions give family caregivers time off from their duties, so that they can run errands, see friends, and take time for themselves.