CATHOLIC CHARITIES

HONORING HUMAN DIGNITY

Senior Services Center

Volunteer Driver Handbook

Revised 2/9/2026

INTRODUCTION AND LETTER FROM THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

On behalf of Catholic Charities, I want to thank you for being willing to serve the seniors in our program and our community. We rely on the hard work and kindness of individuals like you. Individuals with relatively good health and access to personal transportation often take for granted the ease of being able to go where they want when they want, unfortunately many seniors in our community do not have that same freedom.

Catholic Charities is acutely aware of the needs of the growing senior population and their families. The overall goal of this program is to encourage seniors to maintain their valuable role in the community and to support their quality of life. Losing one's ability to drive is quite a traumatic loss for someone who has been an active and productive member of society. And learning about alternate transportation is a daunting task.

Catholic Charities Senior Services Center (SSC) helps address the issues of decreased mobility, social isolation, and may aid in alleviating some stress for the primary caregiver. By placing emphasis on providing quality care, our program plays a positive role in senior's lives. It allows them to continue to lead productive and independent lives by remaining in their own homes in familiar surroundings and neighborhoods and accessing community resources.

The door-to-door service of our Senior Transportation Program provides our seniors with an overall feeling of security and often results in lasting friendships. Our seniors often comment on what a blessing our volunteers are in their lives. Something as simple as a friendly face taking them to a stressful appointment may be the highlight of their week, and that is only made possible by people like you!

Thank you!

Anna Griffith

Senior Services Center Director

Volunteer Program Description

The purpose of this volunteer program is to use the resources available through community volunteers to provide quality transportation service for seniors who are no longer able to drive, homebound, isolated, and who may be at risk of losing their independence.

Our goal is to help seniors maintain their dignity, independence and ability to remain productive citizens in the community.

There are no fees for any of the services provided; however, donations to Catholic Charities, Senior Services Center (SSC) are gratefully accepted.

Transportation Availability: This service is free of charge. It is not an emergency service. It is intended to fill the gap and offer an alternative transportation option. Volunteer drivers use their own vehicles and donate their time to help seniors access life sustaining destinations. Our staff work diligently to meet legitimate requests, but this program cannot provide an on-demand taxi service.

We require 7-10 day notice for an appointment. When extenuating circumstances exist, these conditions may be adjusted at the discretion of the Program Assistant.

Transportation Destinations:

Rides are provided to "Life Sustaining" destinations such as:

Medical appointments, government offices, banks, post office, pharmacies, physical therapy, food box pick-up and light grocery shopping at local markets.

Rides are not provided to "Life Enhancing" destinations:

Barbershops, beauty salons, laundromats, casinos, and religious services, animal clinics, social gatherings or activities.

Typical service hours are Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Grocery shopping is available on weekdays and weekends at the driver's discretion.

Riders are encouraged to be prepared with a grocery list. **Drivers are not required to carry or lift heavy items.**

It is also at the driver's discretion to make more than one stop during an assigned trip. For example, a rider may have a medical appointment and subsequently request stops for a prescription at a pharmacy, the post office or bank along the same route. This counts as three destinations and **each stop needs to be documented**.

It is perfectly acceptable to make additional unplanned stops; however, **the driver is not obligated to meet the rider's last minute request**. These additional discretionary stops do not need to be pre-approved, but **the driver should notify the SSC staff as soon as possible in order for the records to be updated.** Failure to report any

unscheduled stops or transportation that was not scheduled through the SSC office this would negate any liability coverage.

Our volunteers are welcome to discuss driving a senior to a future appointment prior to it being scheduled. Should a volunteer make arrangements with a senior directly, the senior is still required to contact our office to request a ride with that specific volunteer. The volunteer would then be contacted to confirm availability.

We do this to make sure:

1. Were an emergency - such as an accident or an unexpected medical event - to happen, our volunteers are protected by our liability insurance.

2. To establish professional boundaries between the seniors and our volunteers.

3. To make sure our volunteers don't feel like they are forced to agree to drive a senior when they are unwilling or unable for any reason.

Be aware that if a volunteer provides services on a private basis, it may result in a senior becoming dependent on the volunteer. It may become an issue if the volunteer and senior do not set boundaries.

Screening Process for New Seniors

Senior's Eligibility

- Homebound elderly - 60 + years of age.
- Must be ambulatory to receive rides. May use cane or walker. (No wheelchairs or power chairs)
- Two emergency contacts: One local is preferred.
- Ability to understand and follow policies and procedures of the program.
- Does not reside in an assistant living or care facility.

Initial Contact

- Initial screening over the phone to assess eligibility.
- A potential senior is given a clear outline about the service, eligibility and

responsibility.

- An eligible senior will then complete an intake form over the phone.
- Physical documentation is provided to the eligible senior that recaps the verbal information.

- The documentation includes **two** forms that need to be signed to complete registration:

  A. *Contact Release form* **B.** *Catholic Charities Consent to Services form.*

Completion of Registration

- When the **two** forms are signed, they are recorded in the SSC Database and filed electronically.
- The senior is then notified that they are eligible for services.

Volunteer Responsibilities & Conduct

The main function of the volunteer is to provide appropriate and quality services to the senior. The safety, comfort and well-being of the senior are the primary considerations. Volunteers must abide by all policies and procedures of Catholic Charities.

A. **Abuse Awareness Training** - Every volunteer must complete an Abuse Awareness Training for Adults workshop as directed by the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. (Virtus Online) The training is renewed every five years.

B. **Catholic Mutual Safety training -** Every volunteer driver must attend a Catholic Mutual online safety training www.CatholicMutual.org Please note that this training is renewed every three years.

C. **Confidentiality** - All information the volunteer receives about the senior and their families is to be treated with respect for their right to privacy. Information is not to be discussed with anyone without the senior's consent.

D. **Dependability** - Volunteers must be dependable and prompt. If the volunteer is late or sick, the volunteer must contact the senior and the Senior Transportation office. Please give your senior as much notice as possible.

E. **Liability** - Per our agreement with Catholic Mutual Insurance Company, all volunteer drivers must have a minimum of $100,000/$500,000 personal liability coverage. In the event of an accident, excess liability coverage is provided by the archdiocese above the volunteer's limits of liability, but only while acting within the scope of their assigned duties. **This is why all volunteer travel must be recorded and coordinated through staff**. Any trips that have not been coordinated and approved through staff are not covered by the excess liability provided by the archdiocese.

F. **Updated Driving Documents** - Volunteers must have a current New Mexico driver's license and documentation of auto insurance on file (see above).

I. **Senior Rights/Treatment** - Respect senior's rights. Program participants receive a copy of the Client Bill of Rights. **All persons have the right to make their own decisions and choices**. Volunteers should encourage senior participation in problem solving efforts. Volunteers should be facilitators who support seniors in making their own decisions.

- Treat our seniors in a respectful manner.
- Accept seniors as they are.
- Be understanding, sometimes seniors will need to talk. Try to be a good listener.
- Provide a cheerful atmosphere.
- Respect the feelings, values, attitudes, beliefs and cultural backgrounds of each senior.
- Establish eye contact and address the senior by name, avoid terms such as sweetie-honey.
- To maintain healthy boundaries, do not bring personal issues to the seniors.

Weather Closing / Holidays - In case of inclement weather, Catholic Charities follows the Albuquerque Public Schools schedule for closings and delays. If roads are too dangerous to travel, volunteers should not attempt to travel. Volunteer drivers with scheduled trips should contact the senior immediately to explain the situation and the necessity of cancelling the appointment.

On major holidays, the Catholic Charities offices will be closed but we are aware that medical offices are often still open. For this reason, we schedule necessary appointments and a staff member will be on call in case of emergency.

Activity/Time Sheets, Mileage Logs – All volunteers must track their volunteer hours and submit them through their profile on VolunteerLocal. The office automatically reports three hours per trip unless advised otherwise by volunteer drivers.

Volunteer drivers, who are 55+ and registered with the City of Albuquerque RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) program for mileage reimbursement, must submit their monthly time sheets and mileage logs to the RSVP office by the end of each month. If interested in this program, our office will send volunteer drivers an email with the information to submit to the RSVP contact, Josie Orduna, her work telephone is 505-767-5225; email: jorduna@cabq.gov. There is a $25 maximum reimbursement, no matter how many miles are driven per month.

Gratuities/Donations - Volunteers should not accept tips or payment for services as this violates the terms of our grant agreements. While we cannot accept gratuities, we are allowed to accept donations. Donation envelopes are available for volunteers to handout to interested seniors and they should be mailed directly to Catholic Charities. Anyone can donate online by going to www.ccasfnm.org.

Conflicts/Grievances - Any time a volunteer has a conflict, a question or concern about a program senior, a staff member or a fellow volunteer, it should be brought to the attention of the Program Assistant or Director either verbally or in writing via email. The concern will be addressed between the volunteer and staff member.

Senior Transportation Operating Procedures

Procedure for transportation requests:

a. The senior contacts SSC office with a ride request specifying: date, time, approximate length of appointment, and address of destination.

b. Staff enters this information into VolunteerLocal (VoLo) for volunteers to review.

c. Volunteers check VoLo Senior Transportation Job for posted shift opportunities (trip requests).

d. When the volunteer driver accepts the assignment, **they should contact the rider as soon as possible to confirm the details of the request.**

e. On the day of the trip, the volunteer will call the senior **before leaving to pick them up.**

f. The senior and volunteer driver should coordinate an anticipated pick-up time for the return leg of the trip if the volunteer does not intend to remain at the location of the senior's appointment. Advise the senior **NOT** to leave the agreed upon pick-up point until the volunteer driver returns for them.

g. The volunteer driver is not required to remain on location while waiting for the senior. If time permits, the volunteer driver may spend their waiting time running personal errands, as long as the volunteer driver returns in time to pick up the senior. This is a door to door, not door through door service.

h. The volunteer driver is not required to assist the senior in any capacity. The volunteer driver may freely agree to walk along side and reach for items or read labels while shopping. The purpose of the volunteer driver is to drive seniors to and from life sustaining destinations. We are unique because we are reliable, caring and at times go above and beyond our required service in order to assist our seniors further (such as waiting with the senior until the appointment is

concluded, assisting seniors around a grocery store, helping seniors carry packages or grocery bags).

j. **NOTE: On the day of a scheduled trip when the volunteer makes their reminder call, if the senior does not answer, and fails to answer the door when upon arrival, call our transportation office immediately and leave a detailed message.**

- **If the volunteer is unable to speak with the senior and has contacted the office, our office will contact the senior's emergency contacts and if needed, call for a wellness check.**

Inability to Complete an Assignment – Volunteers must notify office staff immediately if they are unable to complete a volunteer assignment due to unforeseen circumstances (sudden illness, a personal emergency, an accident, etc.)

If a volunteer driver is unable to complete their round-trip assignment due to unforeseen circumstances:

a. **DO NOT SEND** the senior home with a stranger.

b. Call Catholic Charities' Program Assistant (505-724-4634 or 505-900-1617) explain this is a matter of URGENCY. Provide specific details, including the nature of the problem, the senior's name and location, and a contact phone number for the senior.

c. Inform the senior that someone from Catholic Charities will be coming to pick them up and take them home. **Make sure the senior understands that they should not leave their location until the alternate volunteer driver arrives**.

d. **Phone numbers to contact in case of emergencies:** Program Assistant (505-724-4634 or 505-900-1617) or Senior Services Center Director (505-402-0753).

OUT PATIENT PROCEDURES

Volunteer drivers are required to leave their name and cell phone number for the return pick-up, but they should not sign any release forms. The volunteer is NOT an authorized caregiver for the patient/senior; **under no circumstances should a volunteer sign any form, which assigns them responsibility for follow-up care of the senior**.

The senior must review and sign any forms before any drugs are administered which may alter their state of consciousness.

For our documentation, these trips will count as two round trips.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If a medical emergency occurs while the volunteer is on duty, call 911 immediately.

Keep Catholic Charities' staff phone numbers readily available. The volunteer **will call SSC staff as soon as possible and inform them of the nature of the emergency, location of the senior and any other pertinent information**. If an SSC staff member is not available, request to speak to the Center Director. If unable to reach any of the SSC staff, call Catholic Charities' main number at 505-724-4670 and inform the receptionist of the emergency.

A report will be written by the volunteer and staff using an Incident Report Form as accurately as possible with times and people contacted. The form will be forwarded to the Program Assistant, and a copy will be put in the senior's file.

ELDER ABUSE

What is Abuse?

- Abuse is any deliberate action, incident or behavior that shall be considered physically or emotionally painful to the person or detrimental to a person's care. Abuse is causing physical pain or injury or withholding services necessary to maintain mental and physical health. Examples of abuse or mistreatment include, but are not limited to the following:
- Hitting, pushing, pulling or otherwise assaulting a person
- Speaking harshly or rudely to a client, or using abusive language
- Name-calling, shouting, or using demeaning language, honey, sweetie, etc.
- Ridiculing, coercing or threatening an older person
- Antagonizing an older person
- Withholding food
- Neglect
- Exploitation is unjust or improper use of another person's resources

Handling Suspected Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation

- Volunteers with Catholic Charities are mandatory Dependent Adult Abuse Reporters.
- If a volunteer suspects the abuse of an elder, it must be immediately reported to **Adult Protective Services** (1-866-654-3219).
- Any situation of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation needs to be addressed with caution, compassion and concern for the well-being of the elder. As social service providers, Catholic Charities staff and volunteers have a legal and moral responsibility to report any circumstances where abuse (physical, emotional, sexual or psychological, including exploitation, abandonment or neglect) of any service participant is suspected.
- The Adult Protective Services Act passed in 1982 requires the reporting of suspected cases of abuse, neglect or exploitation of persons fifty-five (55) or older.
- [As of July 1984, an amendment to the law requires the reporting of all suspected situations of abuse, neglect or exploitation of a person's age eighteen (18) or over.] Failure to report is a misdemeanor.
- Volunteers must fill out an Incident Report form and report the incident to staff within 24 hours. Incident forms can be obtained from SSC office.
- When reports are made to Adult Protective Services (APS), staff and volunteers document the details. Catholic Charities supervisors shall be notified when the referral is made to APS.

Volunteer Termination

Failure to adhere to the responsibilities and code of conduct listed in section **Volunteer Responsibilities and Conduct** will be subject to termination from their volunteer responsibilities at the will of the Center Director following an interview with the Center Director and Program Assistant.

a. **Termination Procedure:** After the infraction has been reported, the Program Assistant and Center Director will meet in person or over the phone with the volunteer to get a complete understanding of what occurred. Based on the meeting with the volunteer either corrective actions will be taken or the volunteer will receive a written document releasing them from their duties.

Senior Services Center Phone Numbers

Anna Griffith Senior Services Center Director	(505) 402-0753
Joel Hebert Senior Services Program Assistant	(505) 724-4634
	(505) 900-1617

HELPFUL COMMUNITY CONTACT NUMBERS

Emergency … 911

National Suicide Prevention … 988

New Mexico Peer-to-Peer Warmline…1-855-466-7100

United Way Resources … 211

City of Albuquerque Resources … 311

Non-Emergency

Police … 242-2677
Sheriff … 798-7000
City Fire/Rescue … 764-6333
County Fire/Rescue … 468-1310

Albuquerque Ambulance (24/7)* …761-8200

Adult Protective Services … 1-866-654-3219

New Mexico Poison/Drug Information … l-800-222-1222

Aging & Disability Resource Center (New Mexico) …1-800-432-2080

https://www.nmaging.state.nm.us/adrc.aspx

Community Dental Services … 843-7493, 765-5683

Senior Citizens Law Office … 265-2300 https://sclonm.org

Alternative Transportation Options for Seniors

Department of Senior Affairs … 764-6400 or 311

PACE/Innovage… 1-844-268-8949

Sun Van… (505) 724-3100

New Mexico Aging and Long Term Services …866-842-9230

Revised 2/9/2026

Utility & Rent Assistance

Low Income Telephone Assistance Program (LITAP) … 1-855-954-6546

PNM Good Neighbor Fund (Electric Only)…967-8045 www.pnm.com/good neighbor-fund

Heat New Mexico Fund (Gas Only) …872-1171

Salvation Army – Family Services … 872-1171

Noon Day Ministries … 246-8001

St. Vincent de Paul … 346-1504

Meals on Wheels … 823-8082

Food Banks

Roadrunner Food Bank … 349-5340 https://www.rrfb.org/

ECHO … 242-6777 https://www.echoinc.org

The Storehouse … 842-6491 https://storehousenm.org/

Rio Grande Food Project … 831-3778 https://www.rgfp.org/

Salvation Army Food Project … 872-1171 https://www.salvationarmyalbuquerque.org/

Revised 2/9/2026