



# Senior Companions

*The Senior Companion Program (SCP) is part of Senior Corps, a network of national service programs that provides older Americans with the opportunity to apply their life experiences to meeting community needs. Senior Companions serve one-on-one with the frail elderly and other homebound persons who have difficulty completing everyday tasks. They assist with grocery shopping, bill paying, and transportation to medical appointments, and they alert doctors and family members to potential problems. Senior Companions also provide short periods of relief to primary caregivers. Because of the program, thousands of citizens are able to live with dignity in their own homes. In fiscal year 2001, 15,500 Senior Companions tended to the needs of more than 61,000 adult clients.*

## **Eligibility**

The Senior Companion Program is open to healthy individuals age 60 and over with limited incomes. All applicants undergo a background check and a telephone interview, as well as pre-service and in-service training on such topics as Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, and issues related to mental health. Senior Companions serve 20 hours a week.

## **Partners/Operations**

Local nonprofit organizations and public agencies receive grants to sponsor and operate Senior Companion projects. Community organizations that address the health needs of older persons work with the local SCP projects to place and coordinate the services of the SCP volunteers. These local partners – which include hospitals, Area Agencies on Aging, and home health groups – are called volunteer stations. The stations' professional staff identify individuals who need assistance and work with SCP projects to place them with Senior Companions.

## **Volunteer Benefits**

For their service, Senior Companions receive \$2.65 an hour (tax free),

reimbursement for transportation, annual physical examinations, meals, and accident and liability insurance during service.

## **Budget**

SCP's fiscal year 2001 federal budget of \$40.4 million was matched with \$27.3 million contributed by states, local governments, and the private sector. Its fiscal year 2002 enacted budget is \$44.4 million.

## **Senior Corps Network**

Senior Companions is part of Senior Corps, which also includes the Foster Grandparent and RSVP programs. Senior Corps is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, which also oversees AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America. Together, the programs of the Corporation engage more than 2 million Americans of all ages in service to their communities each year.

## **More Information**

To learn more about Senior Companions and other Senior Corps programs, call 800-424-8867 or TTY 800-833-3722 or go to [www.seniorcorps.org](http://www.seniorcorps.org).

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