Confirming Services and Safe Communication

Eras coordinates services for over 2,600 older adults and adults with disabilities each year. If you have received a service from Eras in the past, you know there are a few steps to confirming your service. Below is a diagram of how we confirm services for our clients, with tips on how to manage calls from unknown numbers.

Step 1: Call Eras to request your service.

Step 2: An Eras team member will document your request and search for a volunteer.

Step 3: Once a volunteer is confirmed for your service, the volunteer will call you to confirm the details.

TIP! If you are uncomfortable answering unknown numbers, let it go to voicemail. Once you know it’s your volunteer, please call them back to ensure your service is confirmed.

Step 4: Enjoy your service!

It is important to connect with your volunteer prior to your service and is the last step in securing your service with Eras. Unfortunately, if a client does not confirm their service with their volunteer, their service may be canceled. Confirming with your volunteer offers you the opportunity to tell the volunteer which door to pull up to, to learn the color/make of their vehicle, and to ensure you have the volunteer’s phone number. Thank you for doing your part in making your Eras service a success!
Are you Interested in Volunteering?

Eras clients can also be Eras volunteers! We’re looking for volunteers who could telephone other clients to check in and just say hello. If this is something you’d like to do, please call (414) 488-6500 if you are in Milwaukee County or (262) 549-3348 if you are in Waukesha County.

Volunteer Spotlight

For Greenfield resident Shelby Alcott, driving older adults to medical appointments or to the grocery store is all in a day’s work. Except he does not think of it as work.

“I enjoy every minute of volunteering to help older adults,” Shelby says. “A lot of the folks I drive are just delightful people. Everyone has a story to tell, and I like to hear Eras clients talk about their lives. I hear a lot of interesting things about their lives, their children and their previous careers.”

Shelby began driving because of his wife, Bonnie, who had been driving older adults to medical appointments. Like most people who volunteer, Alcott says he started with just a few rides here and there.

Eight years in and Shelby is now driving an older adult to her weekly dialysis appointment and then taking one or two other rides each week as well. He’s also visited individuals who could use a dose of companionship here and there.

Alcott, who is retired from Allis-Chalmers, will be turning a young 81 in June and is active at his church, Layton Avenue Baptist Church in Greenfield. The church has a soup ministry and Shelby oftentimes asks Eras clients if they would like to be a recipient of the soup.

Shelby’s church is also involved with an organization that distributes food to those who need it. Interest in food distribution has carried over to Eras where Shelby delivers senior stock boxes to Eras clients.

Shelby believes the transportation services offered by Eras help older adults to remain living independently for a longer period.

He recalls one regular client of his who could no longer drive and passed away after a short illness. “Up until that last hospitalization, she was able to live independently because of the transportation service.”

Transportation is a big challenge for older adults as many are still able bodied but can no longer drive, Shelby says. “I have had people who would have been forced to move because they could no longer drive,” he says.

“But with this service, they can maintain their own households a little bit longer. I think most people want to live independently for as long as they can. And they want to drive as long as they can. In most cases I see, people can’t drive anymore. And that’s the reason I’m here.”
Building a World without Elder Abuse
Kathy Gale, Executive Director
Eras Senior Network

The month of June is World Elder Abuse Awareness Month. Wouldn’t it be great if we did not need this month? Unfortunately, as the population of older adults grows, and older adults live to longer ages than previous generations, there are more people vulnerable to abuse due to age and frail medical conditions. According to the World Health Organization, elder abuse is “a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person.” The Wisconsin Elder Abuse Hotline notes that elder abuse can be verbal, physical, emotional, sexual, or financial. It can also be intentional or unintentional neglect. And sadly, elder abuse is committed most often by family members or caregivers who are tasked with helping the older adult.

When elder abuse is reported, professionals through each county’s Adult Protective Services division step in. These are individuals with special training to determine if an investigation is needed, if law enforcement should be brought in, and most importantly, help older adults to understand their rights while making sure that their dignity is respected. These situations can be complicated, with older adults afraid of losing their support, even if that support is also taking advantage of them.

The Wisconsin Department of Justice has a free hotline available for reporting elder abuse, whether you are the victim, or you suspect someone else is being abused. There are victim advocates available to help older adults plan for their safety, including finding safe housing, providing emotional support, connecting to resources, and making referrals for legal services.

To learn more or make a report, visit ReportElderAbuseWI.org or call (833) 586-0107.
Survey Arriving Soon

Clients who have received services from volunteers will be receiving an annual survey in the mail during the month of July. This survey tells us whether our services are making a difference for clients, and how staff and volunteers are doing. Results of this survey are reported to funders and also help us make necessary changes. The survey will be mailed during the first full week of July, and will include a stamped envelope for easy return. All responses are anonymous. However, there is also a place on the survey to indicate if a client needs a call from us, and if a client would like to be entered in a random drawing for one of five gift cards.

Abuse in Later Life is the willful harm, neglect, abandonment or financial exploitation of an adult 50 years or older by someone usually in an ongoing, trust-based relationship. No older adult in Wisconsin, should be harmed in any way...ever. If you are a victim of abuse in later life, you have the power to regain control with the help of the victim advocates at the Elder Rights Project.

Victim advocates can help to plan for your safety, find safe housing, provide emotional support, and connect you with resources, referrals as well as legal services.

For free & confidential help:

VISIT: regaincontrolwi.org
CALL: 1-844-614-5468

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