



Monroe Senior Center

Celebrating Life's Dimensions

Members' Handbook



This handbook is also available on the town's website.

www.monroect.gov >Departments>Senior Center

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Welcome

Welcome to the Monroe Senior Center. The Center is a warm and welcoming environment open to the aging community at large. The staff encourages an open dialogue and invites members to voice their opinions as we work together to promote healthy aging.

The Member's Handbook represents the input of the staff, participants and the Advisory Council. Questions regarding these policies and procedures may be directed to the Senior Center Director. The handbook is subject to periodic review and revision.

Mission Statement

The Monroe Senior Center's purpose is to be a hub for activities and services for older persons and a visible symbol of the community's concern for its older residents. The Center's primary goal is to provide a balance of social, recreational, educational, health maintenance, home management, economic and financial programs to the senior population.

Vision

The Monroe Senior Center is designated a Community Focal Point which provides seamless access to information, referrals, and support to the community on aging services and creates opportunities for mindful aging through physical activities, social engagement, creativity, and lifelong learning which impacts the well being of our entire community.

Hours of Operation

The Monroe Senior Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Center may be closed for inclement weather or other emergencies. A closing message will be on the Center's main phone number (203-452-2815); a banner headline on the Monroe Website, www.monroect.gov, under Senior Center; Channel 8 (WTNH) and Channel 3 (WFSB). When the Center is closed, there are no programs or transportation. Depending on the circumstance, the office staff may report to work. *Senior Center closings do not follow the public school protocol.*

Membership

1. Membership is restricted to individuals age 55 and older. There is no residency requirement.
2. Dues are per person \$15.00 for Monroe residents and \$20.00 for non residents.
3. Membership is from July 1st – June 30th and is renewed annually.
4. Members are required to complete a registration card which should be updated as medically necessary and reviewed annually.
5. Members are required to sign in daily to document their program attendance on the touch screen located at the Welcome Desk. If a member forgets his/her key tag, they can still sign in. Replacement tags are \$2.00. It is important to document your daily attendance as program statistics are critical for obtaining funding for Center programs.

Membership Guidelines

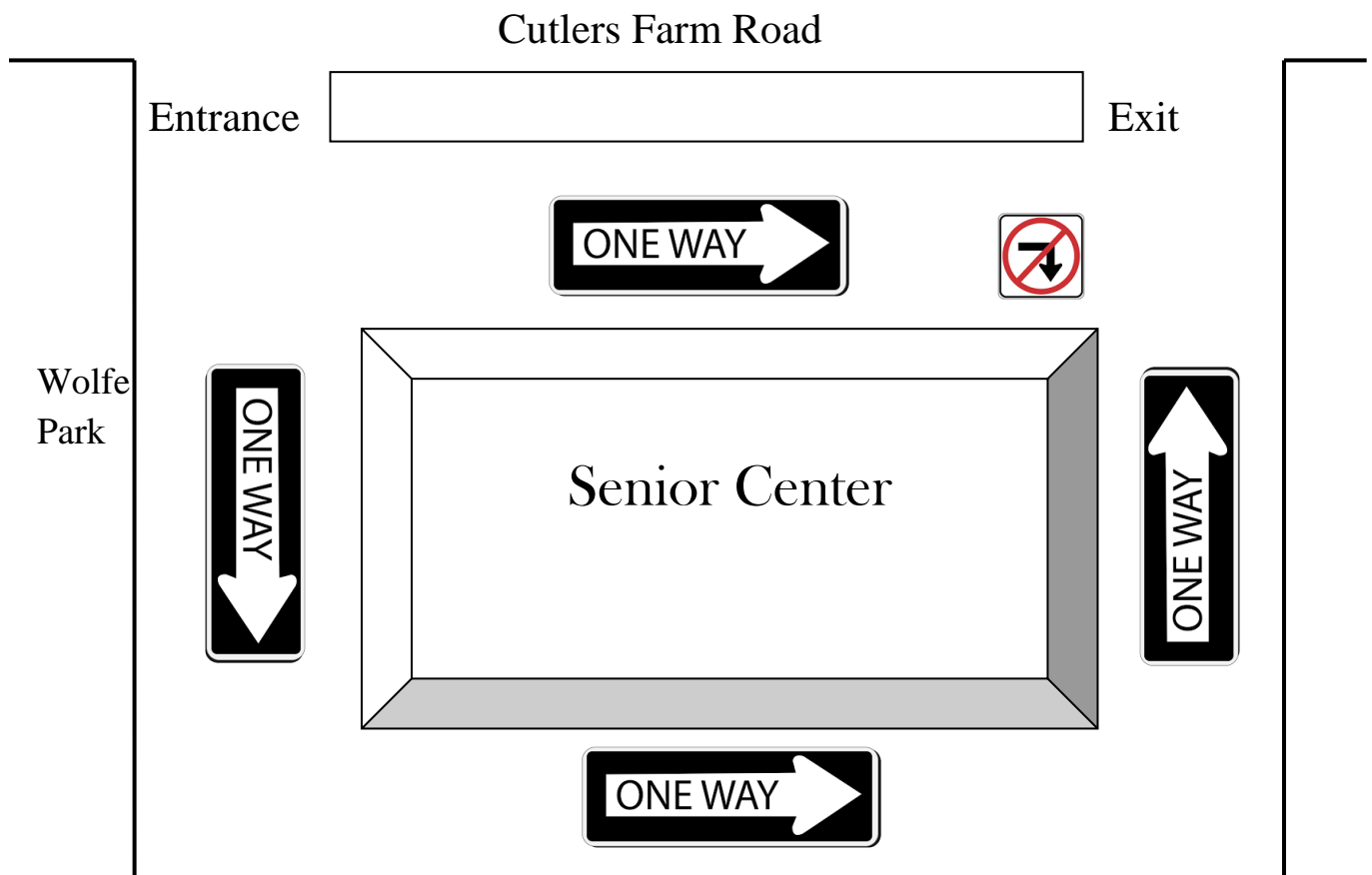
1. Participation is open to individuals who are capable of performing basic skills of daily living (self-toileting, self-feeding, and self-mobility) with or without assistive devices; ability to make appropriate decisions; dress in appropriate attire and maintain personal hygiene. Participants must not present a danger to themselves or others.
2. In the event a participant needs limited assistance, he/she **MUST** be accompanied by an aide/companion. The aide/companion **MUST** accompany their client at all times throughout their participation. In the event the aide/companion does not provide adequate assistance or leaves the member unattended, the Senior Center staff will call the emergency contact on file. If contact cannot be made, the Monroe Police Department may be called.
3. If the Center staff is unable to accommodate a member whose health, physical, or mental condition is a cause for concern, the Director will visit with the participant and discuss alternative programs which may be more appropriate for their needs. *Issues of concern may include:* wandering, prescription drug monitoring, substance abuse, regularly occurring seizures, poor personal hygiene, inability to feed oneself, unmanageable incontinence, abusive or harmful behavior, cognitive impairment, mental health issues and inability to toilet independently.
4. Participants are asked to promote goodwill and facilitate a welcoming environment. No one shall mistreat, either verbally or physically, any participant, volunteer, or other staff member. Mistreatment includes sexual, racial, cultural, religious, or otherwise harassing comments. Bullying, which is any mean-spirited behavior intended to intimidate and coerce, is unacceptable at any age. Please be aware that “saving seats” and “exclusive cliques” are considered bullying and inappropriate. Violence of any kind will not be tolerated and shall be grounds for immediate suspension and/or expulsion from the Center, as well as a Police notification.
5. The Senior Center encourages diversity. Discrimination based on race, color, national origin, gender, sex, age, religion, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation and/or other legally protected status is prohibited. Any member or guest who violates this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
6. Program rooms, equipment, chairs, etc., are for use by the entire membership and are never for exclusive use by any one group or member. Bring any needed repairs to the attention of the Senior Center Staff.

Transportation

The center has transportation services available to Monroe residents. Please ask the staff for more details about our transportation program.

Parking

1. Parking is on a first come, first served basis.
2. Parking is not allowed in unlined areas around the building, this includes temporary parking in front of the building. Only the Center Bus and Car may park against the curb in the driveway adjacent to the main entrance. The area in front of the main door is limited to participants exiting or entering vehicles. During programs with high traffic volume, the staff may authorize parking in front of the building or designated grassy areas.
3. Handicapped parking spaces are available on a first come, first serve basis for the person whose name appears on the required handicapped parking permit. This must be displayed in the window of the vehicle. Consideration should be given to the variant and severity of other's disabilities when choosing a handicapped parking space. Parking is prohibited in-between handicapped spaces, even if it appears another car can fit. If a member attempts to park between two legally parked handicapped vehicles, they will be required to move their vehicle.
4. If a member's car is parked so that it obstructs additional spaces, the staff will ask the member to re-park their car into one space.
5. The Senior Center driveway is one way around the building. There is only one entrance and one exit. If you park on the right side of the building ***you must drive around the back of the building and out the exit.*** No traffic is allowed to turn right at the sign on the front driveway, it is one-way. For safety of all our participants, please obey all traffic safety signs.



Food

The purpose of this policy is to avoid any type of food borne illness.

1. The Health Department has significant and mandated input in the proper handling and distributing of food at events sponsored by the Senior Center. Due to Health Department regulations, food may not be self-served.
2. A staff member with QFO (Qualified Food Operator) certification oversees all food service operations and enforcement of regulations.
3. Only staff members and registered food service volunteers are allowed in the kitchen area.
4. No food prepared at home may be brought into the Senior Center to share.
5. All snacks/food to be shared must be in its original container or prepared from an authorized caterer.
6. All food served must be consumed at the Center. Participants are not allowed to remove food prepared at or for the Senior Center from the building.
7. Individuals are responsible for avoiding foods that contain ingredients to which they are allergic.

Health & Safety

1. Wheelchairs, electric wheelchairs/scooters, walkers, canes, portable oxygen tanks and other assistive devices are permitted at the Center
2. Any member who requires an injection during their time at the Center must either use a private stall in the bathroom or the Health Screening Room, if available.
3. The use of illegal drugs or individual use of alcohol is not permitted at the Senior Center or on Town property.
4. The Senior Center and surrounding premises are smoke free, which includes the use of electronic nicotine or vapor delivery devices.
5. No weapons are allowed in the Center or surrounding premises.
6. Pets are not permitted unless they are a certified service animal.
7. Fire drills, when conducted, require all occupants to participate. Evacuation guidelines are outlined on Page 13 of this handbook.
8. Members and families need to be aware that during a medical emergency, the staff will call 911 and notify the appropriate listed emergency contact.
9. During a medical incident, members who are fully conscious and alert may refuse medical assistance only after an ambulance has arrived and the refusal form is signed.
10. Members who seek private medical attention after an incident at the Center will not be transported to a doctor or hospital by the Senior Center.
11. Any illness/accident/incident occurring in the Center, surrounding premises, or while being transported requires notification of staff and completion of an incident/accident form. The form must be completed and returned to the Senior Center Director within 24 hours of the incident. The form must be completed even if no injury was sustained.

Housekeeping

It is expected that all members of the Senior Center engage in good housekeeping. Please make sure after all programs you clean up the space and use the proper receptacles in disposing of your trash and recyclables. For your own convenience, a trash can is located in every room.

Program Notes

Exercise Activities

1. Exercise activities include, but are not limited to: aerobics, chair exercises, yoga, tai chi, dancing, walking, pickleball, etc. Exercise equipment may only be used for a designated program, within the scheduled timeframe.
2. All participants must be a registered member prior to beginning an exercise program.
3. Members or prospective members may observe an exercise class before committing to a fee based program.
4. Participants should consult with their personal physician prior to starting any exercise program. Participants are required to fill out a consent form prior to their first class. After a serious injury and/or injury, the participant must have a signed physician's note to return to the exercise program. The Center reserves the right to deny or suspend participation of any member at any time.
5. All exercise instructors have current liability insurance and appropriate teaching certification.
6. In the event of an accident or injury to a participant, EMS (Emergency Medical Services) may be called and an incident report must be completed.

Bingo

1. The Senior Center has a State license to allow the playing of Bingo at the Center.
2. A nominal fee is charged for Bingo cards, and daubers if needed.
3. The Bingo caller will announce which version of Bingo will be played prior to play.
4. The number of games played per day and payout will be announced prior to play.
5. Players who hold a winning card must raise their hand and shout BINGO.
6. The winning card must be verified.
7. Players should not clear their card until a winner is declared. The game ends when the caller states the cards may be cleared and the game is over.
8. If there is more than one winner, each player will receive the appropriate winning amount. If a player has Bingo on more than one card for the same game, they will also receive the appropriate winning amount. There is only one win per card.
9. Bingo equipment and supplies are the property of the Senior Center.
10. Seating may not be reserved prior to play.

Gambling

Any form of gambling or gaming, with the exception of Senior Bingo, is prohibited on Senior Center property.

Children & Animals

Children are permitted to visit the Senior Center for specific intergenerational programs and under controlled conditions, as scheduled and approved by the Director. When children are permitted to participate, the age for participation must be appropriate for the activity; children too young to properly participate will not be allowed. Children are not allowed in the kitchen. Animals as part of a program may be allowed as scheduled by the Director.

Computer/Internet Usage

1. Computer and internet access is available during business hours.
2. The Senior Center has two desktop computers in the Watson Library one with a printer, the other with internet access only. The Center has three laptops available for use within the building.
3. Users must sign an agreement and abide by the terms outlined.
4. Please be aware that all data could be subject to review. There should be no expectation of personal privacy when using the Center's computers as they are used by multiple people.
5. Additional rules and regulations will be issued at the time of computer/internet use.

Copy/Fax Machine/Printer

1. Only staff may operate the copy or fax machine.
2. Copies are ten cents per page. Copies related to Center programs are free.
3. Participants using the printer in the Watson Library must come to the Welcome Desk to obtain up to 5 sheets of paper per day at no cost.

Suggestion Box

A locked Suggestions Box is located near the Welcome Desk for those who would rather communicate anonymously. Suggestions and comments are reviewed by the Director.

Lost & Found

1. The Senior Center Lost and Found is located in the Main Office.
2. Items will be stored for three months and donated quarterly.
3. Please make sure to check with the office as soon as you notice a personal item is missing.
4. The staff will make every effort to locate the appropriate owner of a misplaced item, but the Center is not responsible for personal belongings.

Appointments

The staff makes every effort to be available to meet with members during business hours, but due to busy schedules, it may not be possible. To ensure the appropriate staff person is available, it is important to schedule an appointment.

The Main Office is closed to unannounced visitors. Only staff and scheduled volunteers are permitted. This policy ensures the privacy of our members. If you have an appointment or need to speak with staff, please inquire at the Welcome Desk and wait to be invited into the office.

Confidentiality Policy

1. The policy of the Monroe Senior Center is to maintain confidentiality on all matters concerning members, volunteers and staff.
2. All information contained in Senior Center files and records, as well as information obtained while performing Center duties, are **CONFIDENTIAL**. Information will not be shared, released, or discussed with unauthorized persons. It will only be used by personnel authorized to perform duties relative to the files and records.
3. Individual identities or information concerning specific members, volunteers or staff may not be released without his/her permission.
4. Violations of the Confidentiality Policy are subject to disciplinary action.

Volunteers

1. Volunteer positions are available on an ongoing or one-time basis. Positions may include instructors, group leaders, kitchen, library and the Welcome Desk.
2. A written job description will be provided for each position. Prospective volunteers will receive orientation, training and updates to help them complete their position responsibly.
3. Volunteers will be supervised by a staff member. The Center encourages volunteers to discuss their ideas, concerns and responsibilities with the staff. Both volunteers and staff have the right to request a change in responsibilities.
4. Volunteers must record their hours in the My Senior Center program. Every volunteer must wear their name badge while performing their duties either within or outside of the Center.
5. Volunteers will be recognized each year at a special event where they will be honored for their contribution to the Center.
6. Volunteer applications are available at the Welcome Desk. Once completed the application can be returned to a staff member. After the mandatory background check is returned the volunteer coordinator will schedule the volunteer for training and shifts.
7. The Town of Monroe accepts student volunteers needing community service hours. Students are asked to commit to a set schedule and maintain a record of their hours.
8. For the safety of our members, we do not accept court mandated volunteers.

Solicitations & Visitors

1. Soliciting, selling or collecting money at the Senior Center is not permitted unless it is part of a fundraising project or event sponsored or approved by the Director. Solicitations by any person, agency or company for private or personal gain are prohibited.
2. Posters/flyers advertising events or services must be approved by the Staff. Only the Staff will post or remove items from the Community Board. All flyers will be dated and removed after six months. The Center will not make copies of flyers/literature.
3. Events at religious venues will be posted only if the event is open to the public and is educational or entertaining in nature. All material left on the Community Table/Wall must be non-denominational.
4. Petitions of a legislative nature only, may be circulated after notifying the Director.
5. The news media is not allowed to speak with any Senior Center participant unless approved by the Director and is introduced to the members directly. There is no obligation for members to participate or have their picture taken without their approval.

Charitable Donations

The Monroe Senior Center accepts monetary donations. Donations of furniture, fixtures and equipment must be cleared with the Senior Center staff. The Department of Community & Social Services accepts gifts without commitment as to final disposition. If donations cannot be used by the Department, they will be given to someone who can. All donations are tax-deductible, and a receipt will be sent to the donor.

Research

1. All requests for research must be submitted in writing to the Director.
2. The decision to permit Senior Center research is based on: a) the purpose of the research; b) appropriateness of questions; c) length of the questionnaire; and d) demands on staff time or involvement.
3. Researcher must meet the following guidelines:
 - Participation in the study must be voluntary and members should be informed of every aspect of the research before they consent.
 - Participants must understand the full research process and be informed of the sponsoring institution.
 - Participants have the right to withdraw at anytime.
 - Institutions must comply with all legal and ethical requirements of research.
 - Researchers may use incentives to encourage participation, but must make the incentives known to the Director prior to conducting research.
 - The collection of participant data must be treated with confidentiality and storage of this data must be conducted according to legal and ethical standards.

Religious Activities

The Monroe Senior Center is non-denominational, respecting all members' religious choices. However, the dissemination of spoken or written information for any specific religion/belief must be submitted to the Director of the Senior Center for approval before being introduced at the Center or to its members.

1. Programs sponsored by a religious group of an education or entertaining nature are permissible. The activities must be pre-approved by the Director before being scheduled.
2. Attendance at any religious activity is voluntary.
3. The Senior Center does not interfere or prohibit anyone from expressing their religious beliefs, provided it is done in a respectful manner.

Political Neutrality

1. It is the policy of the Monroe Senior Center to remain neutral on any political topic or candidate. Campaigning politicians or supporters are not allowed to visit with members without prior approval from the Director. Political candidates may leave literature at the Center.
2. Special informational programs, during election season, may be arranged to provide a forum on issues and topics with prior approval of the Director.
3. Elected officials may conduct presentations on topics of particular interest to seniors in addition to constituent's meetings, at the Center, as approved by the Director.

Evacuation Plan

The Senior Center will be evacuated when an emergency arises and the fire alarm activates. Emergencies can include, but are not limited to: fire, explosions, weather, biohazard, physical violence, hostage and bomb threats.

- **Primary Evacuation Zone** - Sippin Pavilion in the rear of the building.
 - **Secondary Evacuation Zone**- Parking Lot on the left side of the building which is opposite side of Wolfe Park.
1. A staff member or designee shall report to the main front doors to prevent people from entering the building as well as guide people to the rear of the building so they may exit to the Sippin Pavilion or the parking lot.
 2. A staff member or designee will check the left side of the building to ensure and assist participants to evacuate. Areas include the Women's and Men's Bathrooms, Custodial Closet and Program Room 1. Once a room has been cleared the door will be closed.
 3. A staff member or designee will check the right side of the building to ensure and assist participants to evacuate. Areas include the Library, Coat Room, Health Screening Room, Kitchen and Program Room 2. Once a room has been cleared, the door will be closed.
 4. All participants and staff shall exit to the Sippin Pavilion unless instructed otherwise by a professional to move to the left parking lot.
 5. No one is to re-enter the building after exiting until a professional clears the scene.

Inappropriate Behavior

These procedures are intended to maintain the integrity of the Center, its mission and the integrity of the participants. The following is considered inappropriate behavior as directed towards other members, volunteers, staff or the public while participating in Center programs:

1. Verbal, physical or any other form of harassment;
2. Disruptive behavior during activities- i.e. yelling, inappropriate comments, vulgar language, or rudeness;
3. Removing items from the Center or from other member's personal belongings without permission;
4. Mistreating or damaging the facility and/or furnishings;
5. Failure of aide/companion to abide by center guidelines;
6. Any behavior which is construed as bullying. This includes prohibiting anyone sitting next to you during an activity (saving seats), coercing others to give money or rides and "picking" on an individual or group.

Procedure:

1. A staff member will confidentially discuss any incident with the participant, reminding them of the policies and procedures regarding participation. The staff member may also speak to family or caregiver regarding the incident. These conversations will be documented in the participant's file as an Incident Report.
2. If inappropriate behavior continues, a written warning will be issued regarding participant's behavior and possible consequences. Participant/family/caregiver shall receive a copy and another will be placed in the participant's file.
3. Temporary suspension from participation in Center activities, for a time to be determined, will follow if the participant is not able to correct or modify behavior as outlined in the section above. The decision of suspension will be made by a committee consisting of the following people: the Center's Director, Monroe's Clinical Coordinator and Monroe's Human Resource Director and his/her designee.
4. In the case of a more serious infraction, such as violence, the Director will immediately suspend the member from the Center and the Police will be called. The Committee will meet with the member at the conclusion of the investigation to determine the length of suspension or expulsion from the Center.

Grievance Policy

The purpose of the grievance policy is to outline the procedure to assure that any grievance raised by a Senior Center member will be reviewed and resolved in a timely manner. The following steps will be taken:

1. The member notifies the Director of their complaint. A meeting will be held to determine a resolution of the complaint. The meeting will be documented and all parties attending will sign the document. If a satisfactory outcome has not been found, then a formal grievance can be filed.
2. To file a formal grievance, a participant must state the complaint in writing within 20 business days of the occurrence; the grievance is given to the Center's Director. The grievance should include:
 - Name, address, and telephone number;
 - A clear statement about their position on the issue, along with pertinent facts and reasoning in support of the issue;
 - The corrective action being requested;
 - Signature and date submitted.
3. Within 15 business days of receiving the above grievance, the staff will review the complaint and the participant will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review. The review may support, modify, reverse, or maintain the original decision.
4. A copy of the review will be kept on file at the Senior Center.

Appeal Process:

- A participant may request an appeal if they are dissatisfied with the result of the review. An appeal should be requested, in writing, to the Director.
- The appeal hearing will take place within 10 business days of receipt of the request. This hearing will allow the participant the opportunity to present a statement of facts and additional pertinent information. The participant will be notified in writing regarding the date, time, and location of the appeal hearing.
- The appeal hearing will take place before the Senior Center Director, Human Resources Director, and any other staff as needed. The Senior Center will issue a written final decision to the participant within 10 business days following the hearing.

Commission on Aging

The Town of Monroe Charter states:

“There shall be a Commission to develop and coordinate programs for the aging for the Town of Monroe, consisting of the First Selectman, the Chairman of the Town Council, the Municipal Agent for the Elderly, the Director of Health, all ex-officious, and seven other members to be approved by the Town Council, at least two of whom shall be representative of the age group concerned, who shall be electors of the Town.

The Commission shall study continuously the conditions and needs of elderly persons in the community in relation to housing, economic, employment, health, recreational and other matters. It shall analyze the services for the aged provided by the community, both by public and private agencies, and shall develop and coordinate programs and make recommendations to the Town Council regarding the development and integration of public and private agencies in cooperation with the state and other services to the extent possible.”

The Commission on Aging meeting is held at the Center, is open to the public and is scheduled the first Wednesday of the month at 2:00 pm, with the exception of July and August.

Staff

Name	Position	Email	Ext.
Kimberly Cassia	Director Community & Social Services	kcassia@monroect.gov	4
Jean Gardino	Administrative Assistant	kcassia@monroect.gov	1
Veronica Jensen	Elderly Services Coordinator	vjensen@monroect.gov	3
John Williams	Transportation Coordinator	jwilliams@monroect.gov	2
Evana Falzone	Office Assistant	efalzone@monroect.gov	0
Rosemarie Syarto	Driver	rsyarto@monroect.gov	
John Delfino	Driver	jdelfino@monroect.gov	
Robert Scopoletti	Custodian	rscopoletti@monroect.gov	