



Connecting generations to build healthy communities

**Share and learn skills. Give and receive help.**

## **MEMBER HANDBOOK**

**2016**

## **Welcome to linkAges Community!**

linkAges Community helps members form meaningful connections with people of all ages through rewarding exchanges of abilities and interests. Communities are strengthened as members connect with one another to share and learn skills or to give and receive help. Members earn hours by providing services and use those hours to receive services in return. Through the linkAges Community website, you can connect with community members who share your interests and help one another.

The linkAges Community was founded by Sutter Health's Palo Alto Medical Foundation (PAMF) in 2013 as part of a larger initiative, linkAges. More information can be found at [innovation.pamf.org](http://innovation.pamf.org).

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us at:

Email: [info@linkages.org](mailto:info@linkages.org)

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Mailing address: 2350 W. El Camino Real, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor – Innovation Center, Mountain View, CA 94040

## Definitions

**Member:** Any individual who has cleared a background check and has successfully enrolled into linkAges Community. Members are eligible to give and receive services through the linkAges Community website.

**Hours:** The currency of exchange. One Community Hour is earned for each hour of service.

**Provider:** A Community member who provides service to another member. When recording a completed service exchange, the provider's account is credited for the hours of service.

**Receiver:** A Community member who receives service from another member. When recording a completed service exchange, the Receiver's account is debited for the hours of service.

**Exchange:** The actual exchange of services between two or more Community members.

**Exchange Partners:** Two or more members who complete a service exchange together.

**Offer:** A service that you provide to another Community member.

**Request:** A service that you'd like to receive from another Community member. If you are requesting a service, be sure to pay for any parts, supplies, ingredients, or materials that are used.

**Service Listing:** An Offer or Request that is posted onto the "Service Listings" page of the Community website – also referred to as a "post."

**Transaction:** The process of recording an exchange on the linkAges Community website, which results in hours being deducted from the Receiver and given to the Provider.

**Community Coordinator:** A dedicated staff person who oversees recruitment, engagement, and operations for the linkAges Community.

**Community Ambassadors:** Highly engaged Community members who support Community Coordinators with member engagement and recruitment.

**Community Events:** A free event hosted by linkAges Community Coordinators and members where you can have fun and meet fellow Community members. Check the calendar on the Community website for details about the next event.

**Community Fund:** The Community Fund is a pool of donated hours that supports members with illness or disability.

**Business Partner:** Local businesses that are specifically selected as partners for their alignment with the goal of building and strengthening community. Business partners can support linkAges Community in a variety of ways, including offering store discounts to Community members and providing space for Community orientations.

**Organizational Partner:** Non-profits, faith-based and civic-based groups that are community-minded and are trusted among community members. Organizational Partners often create accounts on linkAges Community to request support from members and post events on the Community calendar.

**New Member Survey:** This optional survey is sent to new members 1-2 days after they become official Community members. All members receive 2 Community hours for completing the survey.

**Satisfaction Survey:** This optional survey is sent to you immediately after an exchange is recorded in order to gather feedback about your experience. It is confidential and only sent to the Coordinator for review.

### **How to Use the linkAges Community**

#### **Service Offers and Requests**

You can search for service listings and post your own Offers and Requests on the “Listings” page of the Community site.

Here are some tips to follow when creating your Offer or Request:

- Enter a short but meaningful title (e.g., “Introduction to Knitting”).
- When posting an Offer, include your proficiency level in the description. (e.g., “I’ve played piano for 10 years and would like to offer lessons.”)
- When posting a Request, be clear on when you want the service. (e.g., “I would like a ride to the farmer’s market this Saturday morning at 10 am.”)
- Speak with passion and be creative!

Remember, any Exchange Partner can record the exchange on the Community website. Please record the exchange within 48 hours after the service exchange has been completed.

#### **Member Profile**

Add a photo and describe yourself so that other members can learn about you. Members are more likely to reach out and respond to your Offers and Requests if your profile is completed. Community Coordinators will also use the information on your profile to help match you to other members with similar language needs, interests, and availability. Please keep your Community account current by ensuring that your Profile and contact information are up-to-date. Your personal information – address, phone number and email address – will not be visible to other general Community members.

## **Messaging System**

Use the linkAges Community messaging system to communicate with other members and respond in a timely manner to inquiries from other members or Community Coordinators. Be sure to communicate clearly and have fair expectations of other members when setting up exchanges. Please remember to contact the other member(s) in advance if you have to cancel.

## **Groups**

Members can join or create groups on the linkAges Community. There are two types of groups: public and private. Public groups are organized around hobbies, interests, and needs. Any Community member can join a public group. Any Community member can request to join a private group and await approval by the group administrator.

## **Community Calendar**

Use the community calendar to search for and create your own events. You'll also find details about our upcoming orientations and monthly community events.

## **Community Events**

Have fun and meet fellow Community members at this free monthly event, which is put on by the Community Coordinator. Community events hosted by linkAges are open to the public, unless otherwise noted – invite your friends, family, and neighbors! Check the calendar on the Community website for details about the next event.

## **Social Media & Blog**

For the most recent linkAges Community news and updates, connect with us on social media!

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/linkagescommunity](http://www.facebook.com/linkagescommunity)

Twitter: @linkAgescom

YouTube: [linkAges Community](http://linkAges Community)

Blog: [blog.linkages.org](http://blog.linkages.org)

## **Community Resources**

In this section of the Community website, you will find a collection of helpful step-by-step user guides, including: how to create and edit service listings, how to post events on the community calendar, and how to join groups.

## **Community Hours Policy**

### **Earning Hours**

There are several ways to earn hours in linkAges Community:

- Provide services to other members. When recording the time you spent providing a service, please round up to the nearest quarter-hour (15 minutes, 30 minutes, 45 minutes).
- Complete the New Member Survey.

- Help linkAges Community staff with outreach efforts, orientations and community events.
- Refer family and friends. For each new member you bring in, we will credit one hour to your account.

### **Spending Hours**

Use the hours you've earned to receive services from other members. You may also donate any extra hours to the linkAges Community Fund (see next section).

### **Going into Debt**

We have set a limit of negative 5 hours for how far members can go into debt before they will be required to earn more hours. If you need more hours, please contact the Community Coordinator to discuss your options.

### **Community Fund**

The Community Fund is a pool of donated hours that supports members with illness or disability. Community Fund recipients would like some additional help, but don't have enough hours in their account to cover their needs.

Any Community member can donate hours to the Community Fund. Designation of Community Fund hours is based on need and is determined by Community Coordinators. If you believe you are eligible to receive Community Fund hours, please contact us.

### **Do's and Don'ts**

Here are a few guidelines to help you have a positive and rewarding experience in linkAges Community!

Please do:

- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of all members and staff.
- Respect diversity and treat all members considerately.
- Respect the home, property and valuables of all members.
- Respect members' time and be courteous about when you're contacting them.
- Be polite when asking for other people's help and thank them for their time.
- Ask your exchange partner for permission to use or consume any of their personal property (phone, bathroom, tools, food/beverage, etc.).
- If renting, check with your landlord before doing any home repairs.
- If using your personal car to transport a member, show the other member proof that you have a valid driver's license, valid vehicle registration and minimum liability insurance – and wear seat belts!
- Dial 911 in case of emergencies.

Please do NOT:

- Use the Community to market or advertise your business.

- Request or accept money or tips for services rendered through the Community.
- Message members with requests or offers that are not relevant to their post or interests.
- Exchange material goods for hours.
- Provide any “hands-on” care, such as giving medicine, baths, or cutting nails.
- Conduct unsupervised exchanges that involve minors (e.g., child care).
- Provide medical, business, or legal advice.
- Use alcohol or illegal drugs while performing services.
- Purchase alcohol for members.

### **Safety Tips**

The majority of Community members are well-intentioned and trustworthy. Most are using the Community for the same reasons you are – they have a need or interest and want to connect with other neighbors and community members. When exchanging with an unfamiliar Community member, exercise the same caution you would when interacting with a new neighbor for the first time.

Here are a few suggested safety tips:

- Keep your cell phone handy and available.
- Share your plans with a family or friend and let them know your location.
- Consider having a friend or family member accompany you.
- Trust your instincts and use your best judgment.
- Meet in a public meeting place for your exchange if you prefer, such as a coffee shop or library.
- Email or call the Community Coordinator prior to an exchange and ask if the member has had other exchanges or any complaints.
- Immediately report any suspicious and negative experiences to a Community Coordinator.

### **General Policies\***

#### **Liability**

While the linkAges Community team conducts criminal background checks on all members, linkAges Community cannot be held responsible for any injury to persons or damage to property during exchanges. Members participate in linkAges Community on a voluntary basis and at their own risk.

#### **Limitations**

While Community Coordinators and Community Ambassadors do their best to ensure that all Offers and Requests are fulfilled in a timely manner, no service is guaranteed. Should your Request or Offer be time-sensitive, we encourage you to reach out to the Community Coordinator and we will do our best to connect you to another member who can meet your needs.

There may be times when the service provided might not meet the expectations of the Receiver. Please be patient and open, rather than critical. Remember, these are intended to be neighborly service exchanges!

### **Confidentiality**

All members must respect the privacy and confidentiality of other members. Members' personal information may only be shared appropriately with other members. Contact information may not be used for any type of solicitation.

### **Problem Resolution Procedure**

If possible, the Provider and Receiver should first try to work out an agreement themselves if a problem arises during a service exchange. Any feedback about Exchanges can be reported in the Satisfaction Survey.

The following steps shall be taken if there is a violation of the Terms & Conditions or policies and procedures stated in this handbook:

1. The member with a complaint or problem should report the issue to a Community Coordinator as soon as possible. Email or mail a written report of the incident to the Community Coordinator.
2. The Coordinator will attempt to resolve the problem within 10 business days of being notified of the problem.
3. A response will be given to all members involved in the problem.
  - a. If the problem is less serious, Community Coordinators will issue a written warning and explanation as to why the member is in violation. Further warnings may result in removal of the member from the linkAges Community (see next section, "Account Suspension"). The Community Coordinator will review policies, procedures, and Terms & Conditions with all individuals involved to prevent similar issues from occurring in the future.
  - b. If a problem is severe and involves a violation of the law or threatens personal safety, Community Coordinators have the right to permanently suspend the offending member from linkAges Community. If necessary, Community Coordinators may also report the member to local law enforcement.

### **Account Suspension**

Engaging in inappropriate activity that violates our Terms & Conditions can result in suspension of your linkAges Community account. After being notified of your first violation, Community Coordinators will follow the "Coach, Warn, Remove" process.



- **Coach:** Educate member about appropriate Community behavior and refer to Member Handbook and Terms & Conditions.
- **Warn:** Provide a formal verbal and written warning about violations.
- **Remove:** Member's account will be deactivated following a formal notice.

\*For a complete list of policies and procedures, please refer to the "Application for Use, Terms of Agreement and Waiver of Liability" that all linkAges Community members review and accept during the enrollment process. You may access the form on the Community site (community.linkages.org) or request a copy by emailing [info@linkages.org](mailto:info@linkages.org).