

BOSTON'S AGE STRONG COMMISSION'S VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Michelle Wu, Mayor of Boston | **Emily Shea**, Age Strong Commissioner
Joseph Goncalves, Director of Volunteer Programs

617-635-4366 • boston.gov/age-strong • 1 City Hall Plaza, Room 271, Boston, MA 02201

Welcome to Boston's Age Strong Commission's October Volunteer Newsletter!

There's so much volunteer activity going on at Boston's Age Strong Commission that we've created a monthly newsletter to keep you in the know!



Inside, you'll learn more about our AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program, our AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer Nancy Mejia, and our Volunteer site partner, Ethos.

Are you interested in creating meaningful memories and connections while helping other older neighbors stay independent for as long as possible? Join the AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program to uplift, inspire, and lend a hand in your community.

Thanks for reading,

Joseph Goncalves

Director, Volunteer Programs
Boston's Age Strong Commission

LEARN ABOUT OUR AMERICORPS SENIORS SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM ●●●●

Boston's Age Strong Commission runs a variety of volunteer programs where older adults aged 55+ can share their time and skills to help fellow Boston older adults in the community.

We currently seek volunteers for our AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program, which matches residents 55+ with other older adults (one-on-one) to provide friendship and assistance with daily living tasks such as grocery shopping or opening and reading mail.

AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Volunteers provide in-person companionship to older adults and those with disabilities and can also provide the gift of respite to caregivers, with service hours ranging from 5 to 20 hours per week.

Why become an AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer? Volunteering keeps you active and engaged within your community and allows you to use your skills and interests to help support older residents of Boston.

In return, AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers receive the training and support they need to make a difference.



Volunteers may receive reimbursement for some out-of-pocket expenses, a tax-free stipend for income-eligible volunteers, an invitation to our annual Volunteer Recognition Luncheon, and connection to free City of Boston events.

Who is eligible? AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Volunteers must be 55+, meet income qualifications, pass a background check, and live in the City of Boston.

Interested? Reach out to Quanda Smith, Age Strong's Volunteer Program Coordinator, by calling 617-635-1794 or emailing SeniorCompanionProgram@boston.gov.



**AmeriCorps
Seniors**

MEET AMERICORPS SENIORS VOLUNTEER NANCY MEJIA



AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer
Nancy Mejia

Nancy Mejia has been in Boston since the 1990s, living in Jamaica Plain for two years before settling down in Mission Hill. “Before moving here, I was deciding between New York and Boston. Ultimately, there was just so much to love about Boston that I moved here.” Nancy loved Boston’s culture and compact size, in addition to Boston’s public schools her daughter attended.

Now retired, Nancy was a director of a home decorations company. She spends her free time vacationing back home in the Dominican Republic and volunteering. Now a volunteer in Age Strong's AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program, Nancy spends quality time with her clients, taking them to the market, going on walks, or just enjoying conversations.

"As a Senior Companion, being with my clients feels just like being around friends," Nancy says. "I try to make their lives as happy as possible with the time we share." Giving her time and energy back to her community fills Nancy with joy. "Life keeps giving me blessings because of my service to others," she explains.

Nancy was born and raised in the Dominican Republic, and finds great importance in Hispanic Heritage Month. The month-long spotlight on her family, friends, and community makes her feel seen and heard.

"It's nice that my culture is shared with more eyes and ears than usual," Nancy says. She celebrates by inviting loved ones over for some food and cheer. Sharing conversation over sancocho, a meat and vegetable soup, works for Nancy when celebrating her heritage.

Nancy believes in the power of volunteering. To her, the act of donating your time and energy to help someone else is something that pays dividends every time. "I encourage more people to become volunteers. I've told a lot of my friends about Age Strong's volunteer programs and the value in helping people feel good about themselves, with just a little bit of our time."

**Interview by Edzani Kelapile, Age Strong Staff, with Spanish interpretation from Jose Ramirez, Age Strong Staff*



LEARN ABOUT AGE STRONG'S VOLUNTEER PARTNER SITE: ETHOS



Ethos, an Age Strong's volunteer partner site, has operated for 53 years as a nonprofit organization promoting independence, dignity, and well-being for Boston older and disabled residents. Ethos provides high-quality, affordable home and community-based care, fostering social interaction and respecting cultural diversity. Ethos has been an Age Strong volunteer partner site since 1998.

Ethos provides in-home services including personal care attendants, home delivered meals, money management, Medicare counseling, healthy aging programs, a long-term care ombudsman, and LGBTQ+ services.



Those who volunteer with Ethos can offer friendly visiting (companionship to isolated residents), taking older residents grocery shopping, teaching older adults how to use computers or other technology, assist serving older adults at community cafes, helping at events, providing workshops, and more.

Volunteering at Ethos allows folks to feel fulfilled, helping older adults in need. Many senior volunteers report feeling a greater life purpose having volunteered at Ethos. Research has shown that volunteering by providing volunteer services to seniors improves the quality of life of those that volunteer.



Ethos, located at 555 Amory Street in Jamaica Plain, may be reached at 617-522-6700 or ethocare.org.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY CORNER



Age Strong seeks volunteers for our ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) volunteer opportunity with our AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP program.

Service Description: AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Volunteers will be matched with students in one-on-one or small-group settings, leading classes, or serving as class aides, assisting ESL teachers in programs.

Interested? Reach out to Jose Ramirez, Volunteer Program Coordinator, by calling 617-635-4374 or emailing jose.ramirez@boston.gov.

**This material is based upon work supported by AmeriCorps. Opinions or points of view expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of, or a position that is endorsed by, AmeriCorps.*

DID YOU KNOW?



Car-Free Seniors Pilot Program, a new initiative providing free MBTA service to Massachusetts residents age 75 and older who no longer drive, starts this month.

In partnership with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV), the program will allow eligible seniors who hold a Massachusetts identification card, rather than a driver's license, to obtain a free-fare pass valid across the MBTA's bus, subway, ferry, and Commuter Rail services. Learn more here: [mass.gov/news/governor-healey-announces-october-13-launch-for-car-free-seniors-mbta-pilot-program](https://www.mass.gov/news/governor-healey-announces-october-13-launch-for-car-free-seniors-mbta-pilot-program)



AGE STRONG SEEKS NEW VOLUNTEERS!

The Age Strong Commission offers four different volunteer programs to help older residents live their best lives, while aging in place.

AMERICORPS SENIORS RSVP PROGRAM

We match volunteers age 55+ with partner sites, including senior centers & food pantries, or train you to help residents learn English as a second language, prepare tax returns or facilitate opioid & scam prevention workshops.



BOSTON CITY HALL GREETERS

City Hall Greeters provide friendly assistance to residents visiting City Hall. Each volunteer has access to an iPad equipped with maps and other information to assist visitors.



PROPERTY TAX WORK-OFF PROGRAM

Boston homeowners age 60+ may "work off" up to \$2,000 from their property taxes by volunteering their skills & knowledge to one of the City's offices, community centers, or public schools.



AMERICORPS SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM

Senior Companion volunteers age 55+ help older adults with everyday tasks like getting to appointments & shopping, as well as providing respite care to care partners. Some volunteers may qualify for a tax-free stipend.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

CALL 617-635-4366 OR VISIT [BOSTON.GOV/AGE-STRONG](https://boston.gov/age-strong)

ABCD FUEL ASSISTANCE

PROGRAM RUNS NOVEMBER 2026 – APRIL 2027

FOR HOMEOWNERS AND RENTERS

We can help you and your family stay safe and warm by covering a portion of your heating bills — oil, gas, electric and others.

This federally funded program serves income eligible, elderly and disabled residents in thousands of households every year.

- If you qualify, we may pay up to **\$600** of your fuel bill this winter.
- If you are **NOT** living in state or federally subsidized housing, you may be eligible for assistance not only with heating bills but also with rent if heat is included.
- Check the chart to see if your yearly income falls at or below the level indicated.
- If you qualify for ABCD fuel assistance, we help pay your winter heating bill by working directly with vendors, and you can take advantage of many other services that are absolutely free.
- **IMPORTANT:** If you applied for Fuel Assistance last winter, you must return the application mailed to you to receive assistance this year.

FUEL ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES: 2026 - 2027

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	TOTAL GROSS YEARLY INCOME
1	\$53,585
2	\$70,073
3	\$86,561
4	\$103,049
5	\$119,536
6	\$136,024
7	\$139,116
8	\$142,207
OVER 8*	*CONTACT ABCD FUEL ASSISTANCE STAFF

APPLY TODAY!

Residents of Boston, Brookline, and Newton can reach ABCD Fuel Assistance at:
178 Tremont Street, Boston, MA.
Call us at 617.357.6012
TTY: 617.423.9215

Residents of Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Stoneham, Winchester, and Woburn can reach ABCD Fuel Assistance at:
2 Florence Street, 4th floor, Malden MA.
Call us at 781.322.6284

Or make an appointment at your nearest ABCD intake site listed on the back