

Ellington Senior Center

40 Maple Street
P.O. Box 187
Ellington, CT 06029

HANDBOOK & Operating Procedures For Senior Center Programs

Welcome to the Ellington Senior Center

Operational Hours	
Monday	8:30 A.M. – 6:00 P.M.
Tuesday	8:30 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.
Wednesday	8:30 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.
Thursday	8:30 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.
Friday	8:30 A.M. – 1:30 P.M.

Staff	
Senior Center Director	Sheila Grady
Assistant Senior Center Director	Samantha Baer
Administrative Secretary	Erica Botti
Transportation Drivers	Ken McCarthy Lou Fleck Gene Allard
Kitchen Manager (Seasonal 9/1-6/30)	Mike Castro

Contact Us	
Main Telephone Line	860 870-3133
Fax Number	860 870-3136
E-mail	seniorcenter@ellington-ct.gov
Website	www.seniorcenter.ellington-ct.gov

This handbook contains information that will help you to become familiar with the Ellington Senior Center programs and services, including general information on policies.

(Rev. 3/13/2023)

ABOUT US

Mission Statement

The Ellington Senior Center actively seeks to provide social, recreational, educational and informational programs for individuals age 55 and older that promotes independence, personal growth and participation in the enrichment of the community.

Vision Statement

The Ellington Senior Center promotes healthy aging, encourages positive dialogue with Town officials, advocates a passion for learning, encourages healthy life style through good nutrition and exercise. The Senior Center works tirelessly to change the community perception of aging.

Background Information

The Ellington Senior Center opened in 1997 with a Small Cities Grant from the Department of Community and Economic Development. The Senior Center consisted of two rooms in a strip mall. By 2005 the space increased to three and a half rooms, an enlarged administrative office, and a transportation office. The Endowment Committee fundraised to provide monies to purchase items not covered by any other funding source. Increased program participation quickly led to the need for more space. In 2010 the Senior Center Steering Committee (SCSC) was formed. The SCSC sponsored an ongoing fundraising campaign called the **Tree of Life** to purchase furniture and equipment. This group was the driving force that led a referendum vote for the construction of a new Senior Center. In 2014 the 10,600 square foot building was opened complete with full-service kitchen, health screening room, arts and crafts room, activity room, great room, multi-purpose, and technology rooms, game room, library nook, café, and additional office space.

Funding Sources

The Town of Ellington pays for staff, programs, building operations and maintenance. Participants are charged for programs and activities to help defray these costs.

Registration

All participants of the Ellington Senior Center will be asked to fill out an annual registration packet. This packet includes the Senior Center Handbook & Operating Procedures for Senior Center Programs, an Annual Registration Form, including emergency contact information, an annual questionnaire and Transportation Program Policies. These forms will be kept in confidential files at the center. The purpose of the forms is to have important information in case of an emergency and participant's signature that a copy of Handbook was given. Membership is free, however there may be a cost associated with some programs and activities.

Non-Discrimination Practices Policy

It is the policy of the Ellington Senior Center to provide service to all Ellington residents age 55 and older and to anyone seeking service on behalf of an Ellington resident age 55 and older. The Ellington Senior Center complies with all State and Federal antidiscrimination laws, including but not limited to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Participants with complaints of unlawful discrimination, questions and comments are directed to the Senior Center Director.

The Ellington Senior Center

The Ellington Senior Center is a public building owned by the Town of Ellington and under its jurisdiction. The building is covered by all appropriate local, state, and federal rules, regulations and ordinances. The operation of the Senior Center is under the supervision of the Human Services Department and under the direction of the Senior Center Director. Programs and activities are designed for adults 55 years and older. Preference will be given to residents who live in Ellington. Non-residents are welcome as long as space is available. Non-residents may be required to pay an additional cost for some programs.

General Rules:

Membership

There are no membership dues. However, there may be applicable fees charged for certain programs, activities, or trips offered through the Ellington Senior Center. Non-resident participation is permitted; however, Ellington residents receive priority in that registration opens for non-residents after a determined time frame, as posted in the Senior Center Newsletter. An additional cost for certain programs may be charged to non-residents.

Eligibility

Any Ellington resident age 55 and over is eligible to participate in Senior Center activities, programs, and trips. Our policy requires that those persons be physically and or mentally able to participate independently or be accompanied by a companion to assist them. The Senior Center Director, in consultation with staff members, reserves the right to assess the ability of potential participants to safely and appropriately use the Senior Center. This is done to ensure the health and well-being of all participants.

- A. The Senior Center Director may require a participant to be accompanied by a home health aide, companion or family member. A physician's permission may be required to participate in certain activities.
- B. Participants requiring an aide or companion must be always accompanied by them while they attend the Senior Center.

- C. If the aide or companion does not provide adequate assistance or leaves the participant at the Senior Center, staff will immediately contact the emergency contact. If that individual cannot be reached, the Ellington Resident State Trooper may be called.
- D. Individuals with problems that cannot be managed by a companion, aide or family member will be referred by the Senior Center Director to relevant services and asked to leave the program until this problem is resolved. If possible, prior to this step, the Senior Center Director will meet with the participant and or his/her family to express his/her concerns and possible solutions. However, all participants acknowledge and agree that if a prior meeting is not possible or other circumstances exist to warrant immediate action, the Senior Center Director reserves the right to take immediate action to request the participant to leave the program until the problem is resolved. In either case, the Senior Center Director and the participant (and or his/her family member) will agree upon a plan of action to correct the problem. Failure to abide by this plan can result in exclusion from participation in Senior Center activities until problems are resolved. Some of these problems include:

Wandering	Inability to toilet independently
Poor personal hygiene	Behavioral health problems
Abusive or harmful behavior	Chronic unmanaged incontinence
Drug or alcohol abuse	Regular occurring seizures
Cognitive impairment	Chronic contagious disease

Attendance and Participation

- A. Ellington residents age 55 and older may attend the Senior Center on a drop-in basis during regularly scheduled hours. Underage spouses may participate in activities with their spouses.
- B. Participants are required to sign class attendance sheets daily.

Code of Conduct

- A. The Town of Ellington recognizes that an active Senior Center needs to flourish in an environment that is supportive, inviting, and secure for its staff, participants, and guests. Sometimes, however, a small percentage of individuals may create problems. For this reason, the following Code of Conduct has been created.
- B. The Town of Ellington adheres to a strict “**zero tolerance policy**” of harassment and violence in all public buildings. If a participant or the general public does not abide by this policy, they will be asked to leave the premises immediately. If the violator refuses to leave the premises, the Ellington Resident State Trooper will be called.

- C. The Senior Center Director may exclude any person who repeatedly or intentionally does not follow the policies created for the health, safety, and well-being of all participants and staff. Actions leading up to exclusion are as follows (but not limited to):
1. Intoxicated participants will be asked to leave immediately. The emergency contact, as listed on the Annual Registration Form, will be contacted.
 2. Possession of or use of illegal substances. The emergency contact, as listed on the Annual Registration Form, will be contacted.
 3. The use of obscene or profane language, gestures, or verbal abuse, sexual harassment, directed at staff, volunteers, or another participant or guest; this could be gestures, bullying, verbal, written or physical in nature.
 4. Carrying a firearm, knife, or any dangerous object that would or could be used to cause another to feel threatened in any way.
 5. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury to another person or oneself (Except in self-defense).
 6. Making disparaging remarks to another person about their sex, religion, national origin, gender identification, sexual orientation, marital orientation or race.
 7. Making unauthorized physical contact with another person.
 8. Repeated and intentional disregard to adhere to the rules and regulations as set forth in this manual.
 9. Proper attire must be worn at all times. Shirts and shoes are required.
 11. Coercing or badgering others to give him/her money or rides.
 13. Willful destruction of property (building and/or furnishings); No alterations, changes or additions to the building are permitted
 14. Strong colognes and perfumes, due to allergies.
 15. Latex-based products are not permitted (ie. gloves, balloons, etc.), due to allergies.

If a participant feels that the language or behavior of another participant is harmful or threatening to themselves or others, they can bring this to the attention of a Senior Center staff member. **All conversations will be handled discretely and confidentially when possible.**

Should staff become aware of or observe inappropriate behavior in the Senior Center or at a Senior Center sponsored event, they will follow this procedure:

Verbal Warning

First Offense: Verbal warning, this step is considered when staff considers the behavior unacceptable. The Senior Center Director will hold a meeting with the person to discuss the unacceptable behavior. The person is told the specific behavior is unacceptable and cannot happen again. The person signs documentation stating that he/she fully understands the Personal Code of Conduct Policy. If the behavior continues, staff has the authority to ask the person to leave the building immediately. If the person refuses to leave the building, the Ellington Resident State Trooper will be called.

Written Warning:

Second Offense: Staff will address the person about the specific unacceptable behavior. The conversation will be put in writing and a copy given to the individual. Senior Center property, programs, activities, and vehicles (transportation) will be “off-limits” for a period of one (1) week. The person will be asked to leave the building immediately. If the person refuses the staff has the authority to call the Ellington Resident State Trooper. A copy of the written notice will be sent to the Ellington Resident State Trooper.

Third Offense: If a person’s behavior continues to be unacceptable, the Senior Center Director will direct the person to leave the premises immediately for such period as the Director deems appropriate (subject to the Right of Appeal). During this period, Senior Center property, programs, activities and transportation services will be “off-limits”. Should the person refuse to leave, the Ellington Resident State Trooper will be called. A written notice will be sent to the individual and the Ellington Resident State Trooper.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, depending on the nature and severity of the violation, the Senior Center Director reserves the right to dispense with the First and Second Offense procedures and immediately proceed in accordance with the Third Offense procedure, subject to the Right of Appeal.

Right of Appeal

Any participant who has been excluded from participation in Senior Center programs, activities and services may request, in writing, within 10 business days a hearing with the Human Services Director. The person will be notified in writing of the date, time and place of the meeting. This meeting may include family members. The decision of the Human Services Director will be final, subject only to the right of review as set forth in the Grievance Policy set forth herein. It is the intent of the Senior Center to arrive at an appropriate resolution.

Grievance Policy

The purpose of the grievance policy is to provide a procedure to assure that a grievance raised by a participant will be reviewed and resolved in a timely manner. The following steps will be taken:

- A. The participant will notify the Senior Center Director of their complaint. A discussion will be held to find a resolution to the complaint. The meeting will be documented and all parties in attendance will be asked to sign the document. If a resolution has not been agreed upon, then all parties will move to the next step.
- B. If the complaint is not resolved, a request can be made to meet with the Human Services Director to find a resolution to the complaint. The meeting will be documented and all parties will sign the document. If a resolution has not been agreed to, then move to the next step.
- C. If the complaint has not been resolved, a letter of grievance should be written by the participant explaining the situation and requesting a meeting with the First Selectman. The decision of the First Selectman is final.

Political Neutrality Policy

It is the policy of the Ellington Senior Center to remain neutral on any political topic and candidate. Political forums are permitted when facilitated as a Senior Center program.

Research Policy

It is the policy of the Ellington Senior Center to inform participants in any research study conducted at or through the Senior Center that they have a right to:

- Be provided specific information in writing about the study: why it is being conducted, what the eligibility requirements are, and what is expected of the participant.
- Expect that all information about the participant is kept confidential.
- Know that the participant's involvement is no cost to them.
- Withdraw from the study at any time, withdrawal or participation in the study will not affect the participant's access to Senior Center activities or services.
- Receive contact information for the study's project coordinator.
- Receive and sign a consent form specifically for each study.
- Researchers will only be allowed to recruit or conduct research here when a copy of their institutions IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval or exemption letter has been provided to and accepted by the Senior Center Director and Human Services Director.

The Senior Center will receive a copy of the final research findings.

Confidentiality Policy

Ellington Senior Center has very strict procedures to protect your privacy in accordance with State laws. All records are confidential and maintained accordingly. The Senior Center will never release information about you to anyone without your prior written consent.

Health and Safety

- A. Ellington Senior Center is a **NO SMOKING** facility. There is no smoking inside or outside of the building.
- B. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted within the building or on the grounds.
- C. Participants are encouraged to use hand sanitizer available throughout the building. If you are ill or have a fever, seek medical attention and remain at home.

- D. Pets are not permitted inside or outside the building except during approved programs. Service pets are allowed.
- E. Food and beverage are prohibited in the Technology Room.
- F. Ellington Senior Center is licensed as a food service establishment. For the safety of all and to comply with State and local health codes only staff members and registered food service volunteers are allowed in the kitchen area. A staff member with a QFO (Qualified Food Operator) certification oversees all food service operations and enforcement of regulations. Participants are not allowed to take or remove food from the building.
- G. Fire drills are conducted periodically. All occupants of the building are required to participate. In the event of an emergency, all occupants may be required to vacate the building until it is deemed safe to re-enter.
- H. Participants must have current emergency contact information on file in the office. Participants and their families should be aware, that in the event of an emergency, the Senior Center staff will call 911 and notify the participant's emergency contact.
- I. Participants who are fully conscious may refuse medical assistance only after the Emergency Medical Responders have arrived and their medical condition has been evaluated. Participants who refuse the recommended medical attention must immediately vacate the premises and will not be transported by the Ellington Senior Center van, medical car or any member of the staff. The emergency contact, as listed on the Annual Registration Form, will be contacted.
- J. Following a medical incident the participant will not be allowed to remain at the Senior Center for the remainder of the day; the emergency contact person or the designee will be notified and is responsible for transporting the participant and ensuring their well-being.
- K. Storage of private property and personal belongings, including food and beverage, is not permitted.
- L. Participants shall not attempt to make any adjustments to the thermostat controls. Participants will be financially liable for any damage caused from tampering with these instruments.
- M. Open flames are prohibited. Candles or hurricane glass lamps, use of sterno devices are not allowed.

- N. The Senior Center is not responsible for lost items. The Senior Center will hold any items found for a period of one (1) week. After that period, the articles will be considered abandoned property and may be disposed of accordingly.

Visitors and Solicitations

- A. Soliciting, selling, or collecting money or other items within the Ellington Senior Center is not permitted unless it is a part of a fundraising project or event sponsored or approved by the Senior Center Director.
- B. Posters advertising events of organizations are allowed on the bulletin board only with the preapproval of the Senior Center Director.
- C. Informal visits by candidates for public office and distribution of legislative literature are allowed by scheduling in advance with the Senior Center Director.
- D. Petitions are not permitted.
- E. Room Usage Request Form (see attached) must be submitted to the Senior Center Director. Speaker Guidelines will be provided.

Parking

- A. Parking for all staff, participants, and visitors is on a first-come, first-served basis.
- B. Parking is not allowed in the bus or medical car area or at the Ellington High School located across the street unless the Senior Center Director receives permission by school officials for a special Senior Center event.
- C. Handicapped parking spaces are limited and are available on a first-come, first-served basis for the person whose name appears on the required handicap permit. Parking is not permitted in the fire lanes or loading dock or under the entrance canopy.

Nutrition

The Senior Center serves a well-balanced, nutritious meal in the Dining Room per the Senior Center Calendar, posted monthly. Pre-registration is required only for special event meals.

LUNCHES:

- Regular lunches are served on a first come, first served basis and no advance sign-up is required.
- Pre-registered and payment is required only for Special Event meals.

- Seniors are asked to contribute the determined cost of the meal, as posted. All donations are voluntary and confidential. Donations of any amount are appreciated.
- No individual will be turned away due to lack of funds. The Senior Center Director may make referrals to the Elderly Outreach Social Worker for assistance.
- The meals program is open to all residents and non-residents ages 55 and over.
 - Bus service is provided. Call the Transportation Office to reserve a ride. *Refer to Transportation Policies and Procedures.
 - No food may be removed or brought into the Dining Room
 - Only designated volunteers are allowed in the kitchen area during hours of operation.

SPECIAL EVENT MEALS:

- Residents are given first preference.
- Meal prices for special events vary and are posted in an event flyer.
- A ticket must be purchased within the determined time frame specified on the event flyer.
- Payment is required at the time of ticket purchase.

Transportation Services

The following is a brief overview. Contact the Administrative Secretary to obtain an application to register for services and a copy of Transportation Guidelines.

All seniors utilizing the Senior Center transportation service must fill out a Transportation Service Form annually. The Senior Center provides transportation to Ellington seniors to local banks, grocery stores, department stores in strip malls, doctor appointments, to the Senior Center and for trips. If for some reason you must cancel transportation, or miss a pick-up, it is imperative to call the Senior Center 860-870-3133. If you are a “**no show**” three times, there is a possibility that you will be suspended from our transportation service for a specified period of time. **In case of a shortage of drivers or vehicles, some transportation services might be limited and/or cancelled. Ellington Senior Center staff cannot provide transportation to Senior Center participants.**

- A. Eligibility
 1. Participant riders must be an Ellington resident at least age 60 years old or disabled between the ages of 18-59 years old, ambulatory, independent and oriented, who do not drive their own vehicles or who cannot access a public transportation system to reach their desired destination.
 2. Members who own their own vehicles may use the system on a temporary basis if their vehicle is in for repairs, if inclement weather prevents them from driving safely, or if they are experiencing a temporary disabling condition.
 3. Passengers must be able to safely enter and exit the vehicle unassisted.

4. Senior Center van and/or car are not available for rent or use.

Program Policy

If not initiated by Senior Center personnel, for a new program to be considered, a minimum of five (5) Ellington residents ages 55+ must submit a written request to the Assistant Director. If the date, time and available room are mutually agreeable a Room Usage Request Form must be completed.

ROOM USAGE REQUEST:

A Room Usage Request Form must be completed for all programs at the Senior Center. This form includes information such as: program name, date(s), time(s), person requesting the room and contact information, equipment needs, etc. It allows for proper planning and communication with the custodial staff.

APPROVAL OR DENIAL:

The Senior Center Director reserves the right to cancel a scheduled use of the Senior Center in the event of an anticipated or past violation of any rule, regulation or law by the applicant, or when security or safety of the facility or of the individuals may be an issue of concern.

The Senior Center Director shall have sole right to determine who is an approved User and to terminate any approved User status at any time without showing cause for such termination.

The Senior Center Director shall have the right to re-schedule any program as deemed necessary.

USER'S OBLIGATIONS /RESPONSIBILITY:

The User will adhere to all policies and procedures within this handbook, in addition to those listed below:

1. The person responsible for the activity must be in attendance.
2. Groups utilizing the building are responsible for any damages to the facility. Should damages be incurred during the use of the Senior Center, the User must file a written report within 24 hours to the Senior Center Director
3. The rooms may not be used for political campaigns or worship services.
4. User is responsible for keeping guests and entertainment from being unreasonably loud. Guests will conduct themselves in a civil and well-mannered fashion. Users will keep guests from littering inside and outside the building.

5. No loitering is allowed after program or meeting has concluded. Exit the building and parking lot as soon as possible.
6. The User shall not attempt to make any adjustment to the thermostat controls. The User will be financially liable for any damage caused from tampering with these instruments.
7. The User may bring only commercially prepared foods from a licensed food establishment. No potluck meals or homemade items may be brought into or served at the Senior Center either by the User, guests or sub-contractors.
8. The Senior Center must be notified of any cancellations. If the Senior Center is closed due to storms or other emergencies, scheduled groups will be notified, but it is the responsibility of the User to notify their attendees. The Senior Center is not responsible for any cost incurred by any groups as a result of such closings.

CONTRACTED SERVICES FOR SENIOR CENTER PROGRAMS:

In order to expand upon the programs that are offered, the Senior Center may utilize outside contractors/vendors for programs such as screenings, entertainment, demonstrations, workshops, clinics, etc.

The User will adhere to all policies and procedures within this handbook, in addition to those listed below:

A. APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCEDURE

1. In addition to a completed Room Usage Request Form, a formal application must be filled out and delivered to the Senior Center. No telephone booking is accepted. The Senior Center Director or designee will review the application and shall be charged with approval or denial of the request. The Senior Center Director or designee may request any additional information necessary to process the application. A decision will be made within five (5) business days after receipt of completed application. The Senior Center schedules events a minimum of two (2) months in advance. Requests received with less than two (2) months notice will not be approved.

B. INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. Any contractor/vendor using the Senior Center must provide a certificate of insurance acceptable to the Town of Ellington prior to use of the premises. Such certificate shall provide public liability insurance for bodily injury and property damage. The Town of Ellington shall be included as an additional Named Insured on the Certificate of Insurance. This Certificate shall be attached to the User's application. Said insurance shall be not less than one million dollars and shall be primary and non-contributory.

2. Should any injury occur during an event, a report of injury must be filed with the Senior Center Director within 24 hours of the injury.

C. FEES

1. Fees will be charged as outlined in the Contracted Services Agreement.
2. For all fee-for-service programs, a surcharge of 15% of the fees collected will be billed.
3. Charges for abnormal amounts of cleaning by the custodial staff will be billed at a rate of \$20 per hour and the User will not be permitted to return. Abnormal cleaning includes: excessive mopping, cleaning or scrubbing that would pull him/her away from the regularly assigned duties of the Senior Center task list.

D. SET UP/CLEAN UP

Unless other arrangements are made, room set up must be done on the day of the event by the custodian. The User must make an appointment with the Senior Center Assistant Director a minimum of one (1) week prior to the event to review room set up. Failure to perform this may result in cancellation of the reservation.

Senior Center personnel will welcome the User at the scheduled start time and will remain in the building during the scheduled event. This staff person is available to answer questions about the building and will help locate any needed item, permitting it was indicated on the Room Usage Request Form, or is instructed by the Senior Center Assistant Director or designee to do so.

The Custodian is not allowed to move, load, unload or set up equipment that is not the property of the Town of Ellington. Before vacating the facility the User must notify a staff person.

E. CANCELLATION

Cancellations and/or changes made to the application/contract must be submitted in writing to the Senior Center. Verbal cancellations or changes will not be eligible for any refund, if due. If cancellation is made more than fourteen (14) business days prior to the reserved use date, the fee, if any, will be refunded.

F. MISCELLANEOUS:

1. Contractors/vendors are prohibited from using any participant's personal information such as name, address, phone number, etc.
2. The Senior Center Director reserves the right to cancel any contracted services at his/her discretion.