

Volunteer Handbook



Students Helping in the Naturalization of Elders

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you are unable to attend a session, you **MUST** contact the ESOL teacher and your van driver (for students taking college transportation only). Please contact your SHINE coordinator if you have questions or concerns regarding the program.

SHINE Coordinators

Name	Position	Phone	Email	Campus address
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Community Contacts

Community Site	ESOL/citizenship Instructor	Phone number	Site Address	E-mail address
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Adult Learning Center	John Humphrey	315.738.1083	309 Genesee St., Utica, NY	johnh@mvr-cr.org
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BOCES	Bob Schaffer	315.853.5984 (after 2:00 pm!)	508 Second St Utica, NY	rdschaffer@adelphia.net
BOCES	Carola Zavalidroga	315.738.7300	508 Second St Utica, NY	czavalidroga@bcce.moric.org
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Project SHINE CNY Volunteer Handbook

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Vision of Project SHINE Central New York

Immigrants and refugees fully participating as residents and citizens of their new community; and students engaging in service to that same community while broadening the scope of their education.

Purpose of This Handbook

This handbook contains the basic policies and expectations of Project SHINE at Hamilton College and Utica College, resources for teaching English to speakers of other languages, personal resources for keeping track of your coaching hours, and space to jot notes for learners or to reflect on your SHINE experience.

Should questions or problems arise, please do not hesitate to contact your SHINE Coordinator: Stephanie Wolter at shine@hamilton.edu if you are a Hamilton College student or Shana Pughe at shine@utica.edu if you are a Utica College student.

What You Can Expect From Project SHINE

- Orientation, training and supervision will provide you with support as you coach learners.
- SHINE staff will plan and coordinate with community partners to enhance your volunteer experience.
- You will be given appropriate assignments according to skill, interests, availability, and training.
- You will receive regular consultation for a review of job performance.
- You will have opportunities to provide SHINE with feedback about your experiences.

What Project SHINE Asks Of You

- Please cooperate with staff and your fellow volunteers and maintain a positive attitude!
- Sign in each time you arrive for coaching.
- Inform your classroom instructor and your van driver(s) as soon as possible if you will be absent or tardy.
- Keep all sensitive communications with or concerning learners confidential.
- Report for coaching on time.
- Provide feedback to the program to help us improve.

ESOL Coaching Resources and Aides

Here are some tips on teaching English! More materials can be accessed online from either www.hamilton.edu/Levitt/SHINE or www.projectshine.org. Hamilton College also has a small collection of ESOL and citizenship teaching aids in the Arthur Levitt Public Affairs Center. And of course, don't forget your most valuable resource, your ESOL classroom instructor.

Suggestions for Working with Learners who are Learning English

- **Speak more slowly** than usual while learners are getting used to communicating with you. You can return to a more normal speed little by little.
- **Pronounce words as clearly as possible** without distorting sounds.
- **Repeat the same sentence** (without variation) at least three times. Rephrasing may be confusing: the learner may not be able to pick up all the words in the sentence initially, but after a few repetitions may understand. If not, then try rephrasing (below).
- **Try drawings, gestures, acting out verbs, and pointing out items in pictures** to “get through” to learners. Don't be discouraged by blank stares! Also, paraphrasing questions may help.
EXAMPLE: What's your address? (silence)
Where do you live? (silence)
Where is your house? (draw a house if necessary)
- **Pictures** are great conversation starters! A good get-acquainted activity with learners at all levels is to talk about **yourself** and your **family** and encourage them to talk about theirs. Photographs are very useful for this. You could also bring pictures which illustrate **sports** and **hobbies** you're interested in. You may find learners who share your interests and start a conversation from there.
- **Ask them to do something.** When learners do not want to speak, you can find out if they understand you by asking them to do something. (“Please sit in this chair.” “Put the pencil on the book.” “Could you close the door?” etc.) You can also work with picture and word cards this way to help improve their listening comprehension.
- When helping students with a written assignment, give them time to do as much of it as possible on their own, then **ask questions to help them identify errors** or problems with their work.
- When leading a small group discussion, **make sure that everyone understands** the vocabulary which is relevant to the topic before the conversation begins.
- Keep in mind that **students' levels in one skill area may be completely different from their levels in other areas.** Some learners can communicate well orally, but are virtually unable to read or write. Others read or write well, but can't participate in conversation.
- **Always let the ESOL teacher know if you need more material or clarification.** They will assume that everything is going fine unless you tell them otherwise. If you alert them to a particular area of difficulty for a student, they can provide practice activities and give more reinforcement in class, too.
- Remember that English is a difficult language to learn. Help the students to relax as much as possible. **Be very encouraging – and smile a lot!**

Above all, **HAVE FUN!** You can learn a lot from this experience, too. Get to know the students as well as you can. It makes them feel good to know that someone is interested in them, their country, their family, and so on.

Citizenship Resources

Many of the learners with whom you work will want to become a citizen of the United States. Below is a list of the requirements for becoming a US citizen.

When you work with learners who are preparing for the citizenship exam, please try to periodically ascertain that they are not simply memorizing the answers to the questions, but that they have some concept of US history and government.

Overview of Naturalization Process

Basic Requirements for Naturalization:

- be at least 18 years old;
- permanent resident (have a green card);
- a period of continuous residence and physical presence in the United States;
- residence in a particular [USCIS District](#) prior to filing for at least 3 months;
- an ability to read, write, and speak English (exemptions based on age and length of residency or disability);
- a knowledge and understanding of U.S. history and government;
- good moral character;
- attachment to the principles of the U.S. Constitution; and,
- a favorable disposition toward the United States.

Once someone is eligible the next steps are:

- File N-400 form (\$675) with photos and supporting documents
- Notice for fingerprints (over 75 exempt)
- Fingerprints to FBI (\$70.00)
- Notice for interview (when fingerprints are cleared)
- Interview (review N-400 and documents, English and civics test)
- Receive decision at end of interview
- Notice for oath
- Swearing in ceremony

Learn more about Citizenship...

- www.projectshine.org : Click on Resources; Field Book 2 provides extensive basic information about how the citizenship process works in the U.S.
- www.usimmigrationsupport.org : Current standards and procedures for citizenship. Includes application, test, Green Card and Visa information.
- <http://www.uscis.gov> The US Citizenship and Immigration Services home page. You can find everything you ever wanted to know on what's required of people who want to be US citizens, including the Citizenship test.
- <http://www.uticaod.com/news/specialreports/fromfarawaylands/intro.htm> Local features from the Utica O-D about Utica's Bosnian and refugee population. Very interesting, useful webpage with lots of interactive links.

Teaching Adults Immigrants...

- http://www.aelweb.vcu.edu/links/adult_learner/links.shtml The Literacy Support Center provides links to ESL sites, Citizenship and Civics sites, and info about adult literacy.
- <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/> {+socialinclusion/adults/refugees.html} Covers a lot of topics about working with adults and immigrants, and the special challenges they face.
- <http://www.lacnyc.org/resources/> Official website of the NYC Literacy Assistance Center, provides professional and lesson plan resources, and ESOL exercises as well.

Learning about your Learner's Culture

- www.unhcr.org United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- www.refugees.org U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
- www.refugeesinternational.org A lobbying group and non-governmental organization that advocates for and gives support to refugees internationally
- www.culturalorientation.net Cultural Orientation Homepage

Policies and Procedures

Commitment

- Volunteers commit to 20 hours of volunteering with Project SHINE
- This should be broken down into two hours per week for 10 weeks, although other classes may be visited if conflicts arise
- ***Twenty hours has been shown by SHINE's national office to be the minimum number of hours needed to produce maximum number of benefits for coaches and learners.***

Attendance

Signing into your classroom

- In order for us to keep an accurate record of your contribution to the agencies you serve, you must sign in on the Project SHINE sheet when you coach. These sheets can be found on the bulletin board at MVRCR or in the individual classroom at other sites.

Lateness and Absences

- Please contact your volunteer coordinator and your classroom instructor if you are unable to report to volunteer or if you will arrive late.
- If you are consistently absent from your coaching site, you may be dropped from Project SHINE.

Learner Information Forms

When you go into your classroom, please take a Learner Information Form from the appropriate folder. **These forms are critical in evaluating Project SHINE and its effectiveness in the community.**

Complete the following for every new learner with whom you work:

- Name
- Approximate age
- Country of origin
- First language

Reflection Logs

Reflection logs help everyone. When you complete a log after coaching, your classroom's ESOL teacher knows what you did in the course of the hour, and therefore will know how to build on the skills your learner developed. These logs can also be handy if you're participating in SHINE through a course and need to write a journal or reflect on the experience. Please, fill them out. You can find them at your SHINE site.

Pre- and Post-service Surveys

For reporting purposes all student coaches **MUST** complete both pre- and post-service surveys, as made available on the Project SHINE website, www.projectshine.org. All participants in the program, including learners, community partners, and faculty, must complete surveys to help us to evaluate and improve our program. The answers to these surveys are confidential, and will only be viewed by the Project SHINE national staff and secondarily by your volunteer coordinator.

What's Taboo: Cultural Competency and Appropriate Behavior

Confidential Information

Adult learners have the right to confidentiality, so if you discover something of a personal nature that regards one of your learners please be discreet and respect his or her right to privacy. At the same time, if you become aware of situations or circumstances in a learner's life that require immediate help, please inform the site manager and/or classroom instructor. Please do not share information with someone who does not have a professional right or need to know it.

Dress Code

Please dress neatly and conservatively for your SHINE coaching sessions. This is considerate of the learners, and it demonstrates to them that you recognize how important learning English is. Remember cultural differences in modesty, too! The big things to watch out for are low slung pants (ladies and gentlemen), and low cut or sleeveless tops.

Substance Abuse and Smoking

While this seems intuitive, SHINE participants should know that they are expected to report to their community site with no mood altering substances in their body.

All Project SHINE community sites are non-smoking facilities. If you smoke, there are outside places appropriate for you to enjoy a short break. Please be courteous and concerned about the needs of your fellow volunteers, the instructors in your classroom, and your learners.

Getting Personal with Learners

Two things need to be addressed here: touching and sharing personal information. Be careful of whom you touch! Please keep in mind the cultural and religious backgrounds of the learners with whom you work. Buddhist monks, generally easy to spot as they wear bright orange robes, are not supposed to be touched, meaning no high-fives, pats on the back, or hugs. These men are frequently students at the Adult Learning Center, and so if you are coaching there you may see them or work with them. Please use discretion when working with all learners as other groups of people that have religious obligations or social customs regarding this issue.

Second, SHINE recommends that you don't give out personal information to learners unless you're certain that you wouldn't mind if the learner contacted you in the future. SHINE-related activities should never require you to share personal email addresses or cell phone numbers with people. We draw your attention to this because, in the past, some learners have sent amorous notes to former coaches, creating an awkward situation for all parties. Use your best judgment when distributing personal information.

Transportation

Project SHINE vans

Hamilton College provides two vans for use by Project SHINE volunteers and other service learning classes. They remain parked in ELS lot when not in use. Project SHINE volunteers are driven to their community sites by qualified student drivers.

A van schedule listing students, drivers, hours of operation, and van stops, will be provided at the beginning of the semester. Although the vans will be running a shuttle system, you must ride the van during your designated time slot. Please keep in mind that the ride from Hamilton to Utica is about 20-30 minutes and the drivers are instructed to wait no more than 10 minutes for all expected riders.

Expense Reimbursement

Prior to incurring an expense on behalf of Project SHINE, you must have your volunteer coordinator's written authorization. To be reimbursed for all authorized expenses, you must submit an expense report accompanied by receipts and approved by your volunteer coordinator. You may acquire a reimbursement form from your volunteer coordinator.

If you are unable to use the SHINE van and need to drive your own vehicle to Utica in order to coach, you may request to be reimbursed at the current rate for the College. Please keep in mind that you should use the SHINE van if at all possible, and that requests will not be approved if your travel was not necessary. Contact the SHINE coordinator for more information.

Please note that fines from any parking tickets, traffic violations, or accidents are the responsibility of the driver. Project SHINE does not assume liability for any loss or damages you may sustain. However, should anything happen, please remember to immediately report the incident, along with the license numbers of both vehicles and any other pertinent information to your volunteer coordinator and that individual will do his or her best to be supportive and give assistance.

Problems with Van Drivers

If your van driver is consistently late or absent, if he or she is an unsafe driver, or in any way indicates that your safety and well-being is at risk, please contact your volunteer coordinator immediately. Project SHINE volunteers have the right to a safe and pleasant environment during the van ride and the right to prompt transportation.

Sample Reflection Log

Project SHINE Students Helping in the Naturalization of Elders



ESL & Citizenship Weekly Reflection Log

Coach Name _____

Date _____

Learner Name(s) List *(Please learn the names of your learners!)*:

Instructions: Use this form as an aide to help you reflect upon your experiences with Project SHINE. Complete the form after each session and return it to the binder in your classroom.

Major Activities:

Observations about specific learners:

Successes/Excitements/What worked:

Issues/Challenges/Concerns/What didn't work:

Connections to readings or to academic field:

Sample Learner Information Form:

Learner Information Form

Site: _____ Date: _____

Learner Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Demographic Information:

Country of birth: _____ Native language: _____

DOB or age: _____ Length of time in US: _____

Citizen of (optional): _____

Educational Background:

Did the learner go to school in his/her native country? YES NO

If YES, grade completed: _____

Does the learner read/write in his/her native language? YES NO

If yes, how well? (circle one):

A little Average Well Very well

English Language Ability:

Has the learner taken any English/ citizenship classes? YES NO

If yes, when and for how long? _____

Approximate English level:

Pre-beginner Intermediate Advanced
Beginner Advanced Beginner

Glossary of Terms used in the Handbook and Project SHINE

Coach – A college student who volunteers in an existing ESOL or citizenship class.

Community Partner/ Community site – the people and places in Utica where coaches and tutors volunteer / the places where they work.

Instructor – An ESL or Citizenship teacher at a community site.

Learner – Immigrant and refugees who are students in an ESL or citizenship class.

Personal Log of Hours Spent Coaching:

Hours:

Date:

Learner(s):

2

4

6

8

10

12

14

16

18

20
