



1. What is TRAIL of Johnson County?

TRAIL (Tools and Resources for Active Independent Living) is a nonprofit, membership-based organization founded in 2017 by Iowa City-area residents who are at or near retirement age and who hope to remain in the places they call home as they age. TRAIL is modeled on the [Village-to-Village Network](#), a national grassroots movement whose goal is to coordinate access to affordable aging-in-place services for older adults.

As of late 2020, TRAIL had more than 200 members, most of whom live in the greater Iowa City-Coralville area, although we have both members and volunteers living in North Liberty, Solon, and elsewhere in Johnson County. Most of our members are retired, some are still working, and member ages range from the 50s to the 80s. (There is no maximum or minimum age requirement for membership.)

TRAIL offers valuable volunteer services such as daily check-in calls, simple chores and errands, small repairs, and transportation. We also provide access to social and educational opportunities as well as prescreened professional service providers.

TRAIL volunteers are essential to our success. Volunteers assist our members in a variety of important ways, all of which are helping older Johnson County adults age more securely in the places they call home. Volunteers also can play a leadership role in TRAIL by serving on one of our board committees and/or on our Board of Directors. Experience in fields such as finance, fundraising, marketing, events, and volunteer coordination is especially useful. Join us and help guide, support, and grow TRAIL!

2. What are the options for membership?

TRAIL currently has two membership types: Affiliate Membership and Full Membership.

Affiliate Membership

2021 Fees: \$130/year for single individuals and \$195/year for households of two or more individuals.

Benefits and services:

- Once-yearly access to a TRAIL volunteer service of your choice (the TRAIL “birthday benefit”)
- Participation in TRAIL-sponsored social and educational events, such as book groups, special-interest presentations, and group outings
- Access to prescreened professional service providers, such as electricians or contractors
- *TRAIL Guide* newsletter and other member communications

Full Membership

2021 Fees: \$600/year (\$50/month) for single individuals, or \$780/year (\$65/month) for households with two or more members. Benefits and services:

- Volunteer assistance to meet needs, such as daily check-in calls, transportation, light handyman assistance, medical advocacy, and house checks when you are away

- Participation in the TRAIL-sponsored social and educational events described above
- Access to prescreened service providers to meet service needs beyond the capacity of our volunteers
- *TRAIL Guide* newsletter and other member communications

Supported memberships are also available based on income level, availability, and approval by the TRAIL Executive Director. These subsidized Full memberships can cost as little as \$10/year.

3. What types of social and educational events does TRAIL offer?

TRAIL hosts numerous events each month for our members to engage socially and educationally with other TRAIL members, and to stay involved in our community. In 2020, we moved many TRAIL events online due to COVID, but also hosted a number of safe, in-person, socially distant activities, from hikes and yarning circles to a visit to a local llama farm. These events are communicated through a weekly email, shared in our monthly *TRAIL Guide* newsletter, and made available for viewing and registration on our TRAIL member website. Registration can be completed online or by calling the TRAIL office.

4. What types of services are offered by TRAIL volunteers to Full members?

TRAIL offers a variety of volunteer service categories, listed below, for our Full members to utilize and for volunteers to participate in! Many of our volunteers are also TRAIL members and vice versa.

Transportation

Volunteer drivers provide door-to-door transportation and often door-through-door transportation. Drivers can provide transportation for regularly scheduled trips and periodic trips. When appropriate, the volunteer driver will assist the member to and from/through the front door of his or her home and help carry packages. During COVID, all CDC-recommended safety protocols are observed.

In-Home Tasks

The assistance provided by volunteers in the home is as varied as the members we serve. Volunteers can assist with tasks such as helping with paperwork, minor household chores and simple repairs, meal preparation, mailing packages, shopping for groceries, running errands, watching your home while you are away, or going for a walk with a member. TRAIL volunteers do not provide personal care services, such as bathing, dressing, grooming, or administering medications.

Yard and Garden

Volunteers can help with outdoor tasks, such as light trimming of bushes, garden clean up and weeding, sweeping, and watering plants.

Technology

Volunteers can provide assistance to members with technical equipment that may include computers, DVD players, phones, or social media support.

Medical Advocacy

TRAIL's Medical Advocacy Program pairs a specially trained volunteer and a TRAIL member to form a supportive relationship to provide transportation to and from medical appointments, a second set of ears for questions and note-taking, and gentle guidance about follow-up tasks.

Rise and Shine Program

Rise and Shine is for members who want to connect with TRAIL on a daily basis to ensure their safety and enjoy the social interaction TRAIL provides. Participating members are paired with a TRAIL volunteer and the two become Rise and Shine partners, agreeing on a time and method of communication, whether by phone call, email, or text.

Please note that TRAIL employs a volunteer-first policy. This means we will make every effort to assign a volunteer to meet member requests, but the availability of volunteer assistance may depend on the amount of notice given, the needs of other members during the same period, the weather, and other factors. If no volunteers are available, or the service requires a professional, TRAIL will refer members to our prescreened service providers. If a member elects to use a provider, the member contacts the provider, mentions membership in TRAIL, and contracts with the service provider for payment.

5. Tell me more about the prescreened service providers. How does that work?

TRAIL prescreens local service providers to meet service needs beyond the capacity of volunteers; these providers – many of whom have been referred by TRAIL members themselves – are vetted by TRAIL to ensure honesty, reliability, expertise, fair pricing, and overall positive customer relationships. Examples of prescreened service provider categories are lawn and garden assistance (i.e. mowing, tree trimming), painting, plumbing, electrical, and much more! Our service provider list is made available on our password protected member website, or is shared with members calling into the TRAIL office.

6. I've heard about TRAIL handyperson services. Can you tell me more about this?

TRAIL handyperson services are provided to Full TRAIL members on a “volunteer first” basis—we will attempt to find a volunteer with the skills and availability necessary to complete the work. If we are unable to find a volunteer or if the project is outside of the scope of our normal tasks (see list below), we will refer members to our prescreened vendor list.

TRAIL volunteers can handle the following specific tasks (and more). Occasionally, it may be necessary for the volunteer to assess the project before determining who can best provide the service.

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| Hang pictures or mirrors | Change batteries |
| Fix or replace a hinge or door knob | Set up TV, cable, or garage door remotes |
| Flip bed mattresses | Attach garden hoses |
| Carry boxes and bags (25 lb. max.) | One-time mowing or watering lawn |
| Take down or put up a curtain rod | One-time gardening tasks |
| Replace light bulbs (12 ft. max. ht.) | One-time household tasks |
| Replace heater/refrigerator filters | Reset a breaker box |
| Install shower head | Move and clean porch and patio furniture |
| Paint mailbox | Pot or plant plants |
| Replace door screen | Install solar lights |
| Replace toilet seat | Replace/repair doorbells |

Please note: the member is responsible for supplying the necessary materials and tools (if applicable) to complete the project.

In order to avoid liability issues, TRAIL does not perform services best handled by a professional or services that may endanger our volunteers, nor do we provide repetitive tasks that require regular services. TRAIL volunteers do not provide the following services:

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| Replace electrical wiring or breakers | Fix garage door springs or bent guides |
| Hang TV/heavy objects on the wall | Move heavy furniture |
| Replace faucet or toilet | Crawl inside attics or crawl spaces |
| Fix serious leaks | Paint anything other than small objects |
| Provide plumbing that opens a seal/fitting | Clean roof gutters above 12 feet |
| Install grab bars or ramps | Provide new construction |
| Climb ladders above 12 feet | Conduct a task requiring a license or permit |

7. How do I join TRAIL?

There are a variety of ways you can join TRAIL! TRAIL membership applications are available on our website at trailofjohnsoncounty.org/membership/how-to-join

- If you are interested in **Affiliate membership (individual or household)** you have the option to either sign up online via the TRAIL website, or you can download the application and return it our office via email or U.S. mail using the addresses listed below
- If you are interested in our **Full Membership (individual or household)** download the application from our website, print and complete, and return to our office, again using methods listed below.

Return (completed and scanned) applications via email to membersupport@trailofjohnsoncounty.org.

Return (printed and completed) applications via U.S. mail to:

TRAIL of Johnson County
28 S. Linn Street
Room 201
Iowa City, IA 52240

Or, if you prefer, call the TRAIL office at 319-800-9003 and Sue Mellecker, our Member and Volunteer Services Coordinator, will be happy to assist you with the application process.

8. What if I have additional questions?

If you would like to learn more about TRAIL, just visit our website (trailofjohnsoncounty.org) or call our office at (319) 800-9003.