

Masons Care

*A 6 Step Guide to
Effectively Caring for and Supporting
Older Brethren and Masonic Widows*



West Virginia Masonic Outreach Program

A Program of  West Virginia Masonic Outreach

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Masons can do simple things to make big differences. *This guide will help your Lodge become an effective support system for your older Brethren and widows, while at the same time providing rewarding and meaningful opportunities for the Brethren to give back and make a difference.* Your older members and widows lives will be more enriched, your members will build meaningful relationships, and your Lodge will be stronger.

Older Adults in Crisis



What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal. — Albert Pike

The Wall Street Journal reported in December of 2018 that **today's older generation is the loneliest in the history of the US.**

Loneliness is linked directly to early mortality, having negative health impacts akin to smoking 15 cigarettes or drinking six alcoholic beverages a day. Additionally, cognitive decline, depression, dementia, high blood pressure and impaired immune systems can also be caused by loneliness. ***This crisis doesn't just affect older adults—it costs Medicaid \$6.7 billion in additional skilled nursing care. We all pay more.***

Older adults face increasing financial challenges and isolation. While longevity has been increasing because of improvements in medicine and healthier lifestyles, medical and other costs have soared. This means older adults on fixed incomes and their families have to make tough choices, because they lack financial preparation or face unforeseen circumstances.

- Nearly one in five people over the age of 65 live in poverty in the US.
- A majority of Baby Boomers and people over the age of 50 have saved less than \$10,000 for their retirement needs.
- Maximum Social Security is just \$33,342 per year.
- Assisted living—private one bedroom unit costs \$4,500 per month or \$54,000 per year.
- Skilled nursing care averages \$82,000 for a shared room.

All this, while a majority of older adults want to stay in their home surrounded by friends and family.

"Danny Miner, a 66-year-old retired chemical plant supervisor, spends most days alone in his apartment, with "Gunsmoke" reruns to keep him company and a phone that rarely rings.

Old age wasn't supposed to feel this lonely... now his legs ache and his balance is faulty, and he's stopped going to church or meeting friends at the Marine Corps League, a group for former Marines.

"I get a little depressed from time to time," he says.

- The Loneliest Generation: Americans, More Than Ever, Are Aging Alone, Wall Street Journal, December 2018

So, what is our solution?

Aging in Place—Dignity and Independence

Aging in place is a set of strategies to help older adults and those with disabilities stay in their homes for as long as possible, while leading rich and dignified lives.

It is more than just staying in your home. Successful aging in place involves a healthy, stress-free, positive mental outlook about your daily life, and a system of supports to help individuals thrive and live their older years with dignity.

Aging in place works best when older adults have a strong support system in place to help smooth over the rough patches.



Benefits of Aging in Place

- Preserving independence
- Maintaining community connections
- Being in the neighborhood and place you know
- Reduced senior care costs

Benefits to Masons and the Community

- Give Masons purpose & reasons to stay engaged
- Build friendships and mentorships
- Saves families and taxpayer dollars

Ways Masons Can Help Older Brethren & Widows Successfully Age in Place

- Regular contact—calls, cards & visits
- Building friendships—games, reading together, sharing memories
- Help with household chores
- Help with transportation to places, the grocery store, appointments & Lodge
- Keeping an eye out for safety issues
- Connecting older adults with professionals when challenges get bigger

Partnership for Success

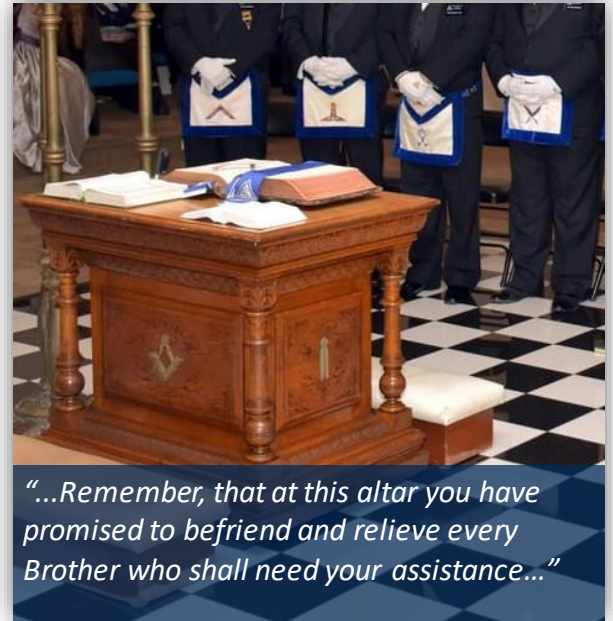
Our goal is to support every Masonic Lodge in West-Virginia to assure that our older Brethren and Masonic widows are being looked after, their needs are met, and they have dignity and meaning in their life.

Most Lodge leaders believe their Lodge can do a better job in connecting with and supporting their older Brethren and Masonic widows. We're here to help. We do this by working with you to develop a concrete plan that helps you engage with and maintain connection with your older Brethren and widows. Over time, your members performing these calls and home visits will naturally develop enriching relationships with their older Brethren

and widows. It's through these relationships that your Lodge is more likely to learn when they're struggling. When you discover this – call us. Our Coordinator is professionally trained to address crisis and aging related challenges, and will work with you and your Lodge to bring them relief.

Masonic Outreach Services is a program of West Virginia Masonic Charities. Our vision is our members are able to live their lives safely, with meaning, and dignity. We do this through education programs, information & referrals, benefits assistance, crisis intervention, and on-going monitoring of care.

Partnership First Step — We help your Lodge decide how it wants to engage its members, older members and widow. Then, assist in creating plans to keep track of, stay engaged with, and tend to your distress brothers, older Brothers and widows. Let us help you build your Lodge's program and sustain it for years to come!



Masonic Outreach Services Commitment to Your Lodge

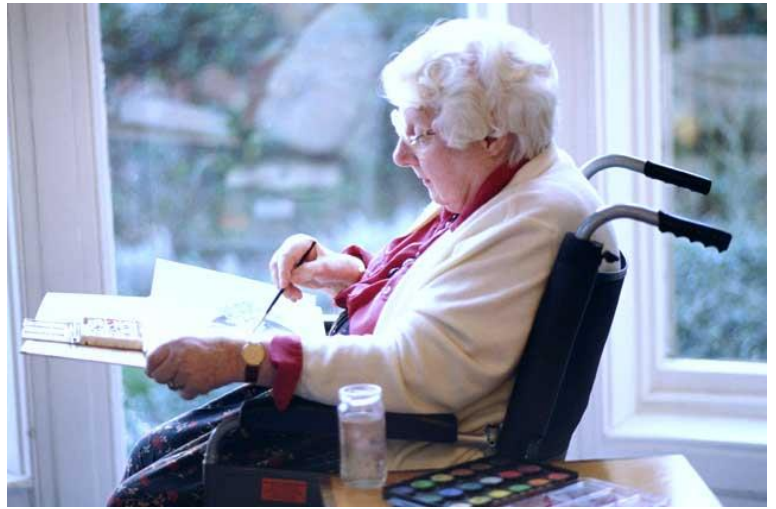
1. We consult with Lodge leadership to explore options
2. We help Lodge leadership identify, train, and support Lodge Outreach leaders
3. We partner to develop a tailored Lodge plan
4. We help your Lodge move from plan to action
5. We assist when a member or widow is in trouble
6. We help your Lodge keep on track, monitor the program, and celebrate successes

Getting Started

1. Leadership Support

The success of your Lodge's outreach effort will depend on how well Lodge leadership commits to it over a period of time, and how much it becomes an expectation that membership participates. This is a good place to reinforce the commitments.

This program works best when the Master, Wardens, and Deacons in the progressive officer line both understand it, pledge to prioritize it, and support it as they move through the officer chairs. Nothing will kill this program quicker than a Master withholding support or not keeping an emphasis on it.



Support Means:

- Identifying an Outreach Chairman to lead the effort
- Establishing a committee of two to three individuals who will commit to prioritize the work
- Setting the tone with the Brethren—creating the expectation that this effort is both an opportunity to build fulfilling relationships and give back, but that it's also our duty
- Setting the expectation that Brethren keep their Member profile updated, and that their spouse's first and last name are recorded
- Expecting the Lodge Secretary to keep on top of lists and to partner with the Outreach program
- Checking in with and rallying the Chairman and committee
- Assuring there's a monthly report at each Stated Meeting—that successes are celebrated, and needs are being met

2. Selecting Your Team

Your Lodge will need someone who is willing and able to spearhead the effort. Someone who can lead, motivate, and keep your Lodge engaged. We recommend this not be a principal officer. Most importantly it's someone who is willing and able to lead the effort for more than a year.

A Lodge Outreach Chairman must be an outgoing, take-charge type of Mason—and someone who is also willing to mentor his replacement. You know who he is (and he knows who he is, too.) The Lodge's leadership must seek out and identify potential candidates for this highly self-disciplined position with the idea that this Chairman will not be performing all the visits and outreach contacts by himself. It has to be a total Lodge effort with your Chairman blazing the way forward.

List Potential Outreach Chairman: Name: 1) _____

2) _____

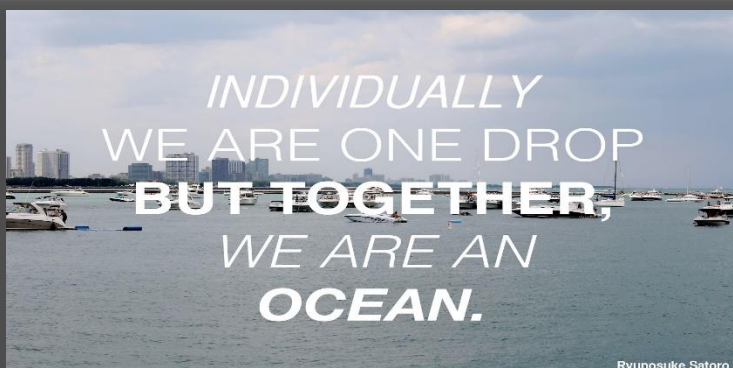
3) _____

Your Chairman will also need help—work with him to identify two to three additional people who are willing to assist over the long term to help make the effort successful, and who will help keep it going. Consider the opportunities to engage newer Masons in this effort.

Goal Setting

Make the initial outreach goals easily attainable by all involved. We recommend each team member contact two people a month—more if there's time.

We've attached a suggested phone script if some Lodge members are not comfortable initiating the first calls. Personal visits are also highly encouraged.



3. Creating the Plan—Selecting Your Outreach Activities

1. We will add Outreach Committee reports to our Stated agenda: ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Funds for our program's activities will be secured through: _____
3. Contact with older members will be ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Annually
4. Contact with widows will be ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Annually
5. We will do home visits ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. We will do phone visits ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Brothers will take them to lunch? ☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes: ☐ Older members ☐ Widows
8. We will send birthday cards? ☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes: ☐ Older members ☐ Widows
9. We will send holiday cards? ☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes: ☐ Older members ☐ Widows
10. We will send widows Valentine's Day cards?
11. We will call older member and widows to lend our support before and/or after: ☐ Yes ☐ No
☐ Storms ☐ Heat waves ☐ Excessive cold ☐ Natural disaster
12. We will have home/yard improvement events? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If Yes: ☐ Once a year ☐ Twice a year ☐ More than twice
13. We will feature our Outreach Committee events in our newsletter, on our Facebook page and other used social media? ☐ Yes ☐ No
14. Other Activities: _____

Annual Event

- Our annual event will be for: ☐ Older Brethren ☐ MasonicWidows ☐ Both
- It will be a: ☐ Picnic ☐ Luncheon ☐ Dinner ☐ Other: _____
- It will be in: ☐ Spring ☐ Summer ☐ Fall ☐ Winter
- Additional Ideas: _____

4. Building and Managing Your Lists

Member lists and widows lists are often out of date. Begin your program now with the names you have. Add as you go by using these suggestions for finding more of your older Brethren and widows.

1. Lodge Secretary membership list/Grand Lodge
2. Lodge Secretary widows list
3. Grand Lodge reports (deceased members in last 20 years)
4. Ask seasoned members
5. Ask a widow about other widows
6. Check original petition
7. Check old printed Roster for Ladies names
8. Other:

It's the Secretary's responsibility to keep updated lists. The Chairman works with the Secretary to see that the lists are continually updated.



5. Reporting Out—At Every Meeting—Keep the Energy Up!

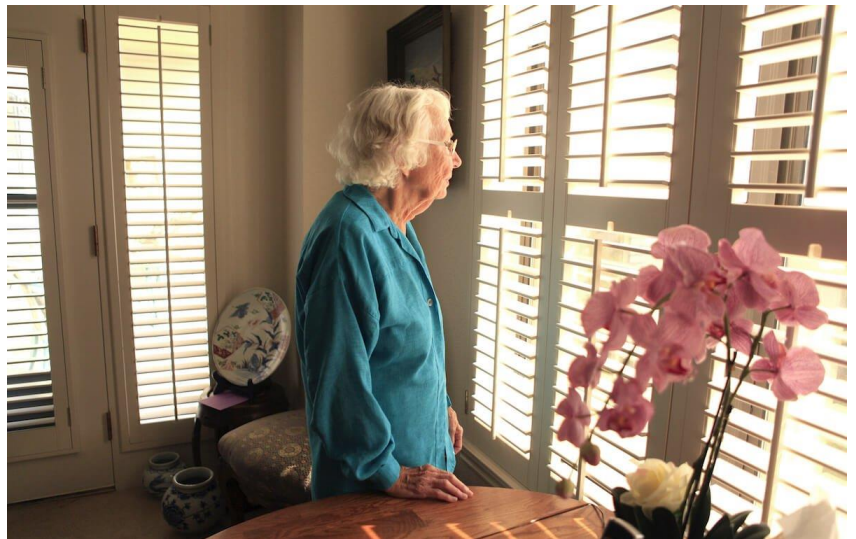
Sustainability and continuity should be clear goals of the Lodge with respect to its commitment to its outreach program and connection with its older Brethren, Masonic widows.

The Worshipful Master should include an Outreach Committee report at every Stated Meeting.

The Lodge's Chairman should be prepared to present a progress report on how many older members and widows have been contacted in the previous month. The Chairman's report should also include future goals plus planned events and activities to encourage social contact with your older members and widows.

Reinforce Your Lodge's Culture of Caring for Your Older Members and Widows

Have members who called or visited with an older member or widow, stand and share their experience. It's important for others to hear the positive impact these interactions create. Consider having two members stand and share monthly. Doing so reinforced your Lodge's culture of caring.



Report Ideas

1. Number of people on the list
2. Number of phone contacts made
3. Number of in-person visits made
4. Number of people referred to Masonic Outreach Program for assistance
5. Important status updates
6. Upcoming events and activities
7. **The positive impact the interaction had on them and you**

6. Implementing Your Outreach Program

Here's a quick checklist to guide your Lodge through the steps in building a strong and sustainable outreach program.

Step 1 Leadership Support

- ☐ Identify outreach Chairman
- ☐ Establish a committee of two to three members
- ☐ Set tone with members that this is an opportunity and our duty
- ☐ Expect Lodge Secretary to continually update the lists of members & widows
- ☐ Assure there's a monthly report at each Stated Meeting and that successes are celebrated.

Step 2 Selecting the Team

- ☐ Outreach Chairman that can lead, motivate and keep Lodge engaged
- ☐ 2-3 Brothers who commit to work with and support the Chairman

Step 3 Creating the Plan—Selecting Your Outreach Activities

- ☐ Draft Outreach Activities Plan (Page 8)
- ☐ Present Plan at an officer's meeting for review
- ☐ Officers approve Plan and commit to supporting it
- ☐ Present Plan at a Stated Meeting— members agree to support it

Step 4 Building Your List

- ☐ Membership list is updated and older Brethren to call are identified
- ☐ Widows list is updated (All widows are called)

Step 5 Reporting Out—At Every Stated Meeting—Keep the Energy Up!

- ☐ Report out at every Stated Meeting
- ☐ Keep Masonic Outreach Program involved. Share your successes and when you come across a member in need of assistance.

Go!

- ☐ Committee begins calling your older members and widows (Two each)
- ☐ Recruit several more active members to make calls (Two each)
- ☐ Align newly Raised Brothers with two to call

Appendix

- Sample Outreach Activity Plan
- Phone Script—Older Brethren
- Sample Phone Script—Widows
- Sample Letter—Older Brethren to Reconnect
- Sample Letter—Lodge Letter to Recent Widow
- Notes
- Contact Information

Recommended Outreach Activity Plan

- 1) Outreach Committee reports are on every Stated agenda
- 2) Funds for our program's activities are secured by _____
- 3) Contact with older members will be at a minimum quarterly
- 4) Contact with widows will be at a minimum quarterly
- 5) We will do home visits
- 6) We will do phone visits
- 7) Brothers will take older members and widows to lunch
- 8) We will send holiday cards to older members and widows
- 9) We will send widows Birthday Day cards
- 10) We will call older member and widows to lend our support before and/or after storms, heatwaves, excessive cold, and natural disasters
- 11) We will have home/yard improvement events twice a year
- 12) We will feature our Outreach Committee events in our newsletter, on our Facebook page and other used social media
- 13) We will have two annual events. One specifically for widows and one for both older members and widows.

SAMPLE PHONE SCRIPT: OUTREACH TO OLDER MASONIC MEMBERS

Maintaining regular contact with senior fraternal members helps maintain their connection to the Lodge and Fraternity, and ensures they are aware of the resources available to them through the fraternity. Use this phone script to check in about any needs.

Good morning/afternoon!

This is _____, From _____. I'm calling to check-in since it's been awhile since you have attended Lodge.

How are you? (How's your health?)

Is there anything the Lodge can do for you - give you a ride sometime, or help with a project around your house? If you think of anything, here's my phone number_____.

Also, may I confirm your mailing address? I want to make sure you're receiving the News Letter, and I would like to send you a description of what Masonic Outreach Program offers.

While we're at it, let me give you another number. Ready? It's 1-800-366-8384. That's our Masonic Outreach Program Line. If you or your family ever need support, from health problems to concerns about money, or to help find a different living situation, you can call them.

Thanks for taking a few minutes to talk with me today. I hope we may talk again soon. If you ever need anything or just want to say hello, you may always give me a call.

If they have health or financial troubles:

I'm sorry to hear that. Have you thought about calling our Masonic Outreach Program? They can connect you to support, including health, and potentially, financial assistance. Do you have a pen handy? The phone number is 1-800-366-8384. If you'd like, I can even call for you, and give them your number. Would you like me to do that?

I'll give you a call again next week, in case you have any questions. In the meantime, let me give you my number_____. If you need anything or just want to talk, just pick up the phone.

Thanks for taking a few minutes to talk with me today.

If the member does not answer:

This is _____, From _____. I'm calling to check in since it's been awhile since you have attended Lodge and we've been wondering how you're doing.

If you ever need anything or just want to say hello, you may always give me a call. I'd really love to hear from you. My phone number is_____.

I wanted to let you know that if you or your family need support with anything, you may also call the Masonic Outreach Program at 1-800-366-8384.

I hope you are doing well and that we'll see you again at Lodge soon.

SAMPLE PHONE SCRIPT: OUTREACH TO MASONIC WIDOWS

Maintaining regular contact with Masonic Widows helps you maintain their connection to the Lodge and makes it easier to recognize if they might need your help. Here is a sample phone script for reaching out. You may wish to take a few notes during your call so that you can remember what was spoken about and follow up, if needed.

Good morning/afternoon!

This is _____, From _____. I am reaching out to our Masonic Widows to see how they're doing and if they need anything.

So, how are you doing today?

Is there anything we can do to assist you? Have you been getting out, or is someone checking on you? (If not, would you like someone from the Lodge to come by?)

Optional questions/topics:

- Follow up on a previous call: **How is your shoulder doing since your surgery? How is your son/daughter?** Ask about their pet or a hobby they enjoy.
- Holidays: **Are you ready for the holiday? Do you need a ride to the store to get gifts or treats for family and friends?** (If yes, schedule a time.)

Do you need anything?

I would like to send you a holiday card (and/or birthday card)? Can you confirm your mailing address? I want to make sure what I have is correct.

By the way, do you have the phone number for Masonic Outreach Program? If you're in need of assistance you may call me and you can call them. Do you have a pen and piece of paper? Good. Their toll-free number is 1-800-366-8384. My number is _____.

May I mail you a letter that describes their Program?

Well, it has been nice talking with you and I will be following up with you periodically, if that's OK? And, you know you may call me anytime, right?

I've enjoyed talking with you this morning/afternoon. I hope you have a good day. Thank you for taking my call.

If the widow does not answer:

This is _____, from _____. I'm calling to introduce myself and to let you know that the we were wondering how you're doing. If you ever need anything or just want to say hello, you may always call me. My phone number is _____.

I also wanted to let you know that if you or your family need support with anything, you may also call Masonic Outreach Program at 1-800-366-8384. I hope you're doing well. I will try to reach you again soon.

(Lodge Stationary)

Sample Lodge letter to Older Brother to Reconnect

(Date)

(B, WB, VW, etc.) __ (Name) _____

(Street Address)

(City, State Zip)

Dear (B, WB, VW, etc.) __ (Name) _____

Greetings from _ (Lodge name and #) _.

As Masons, we're concerned with the general welfare of our Brothers. Since it has been a while since we've seen you, we wanted to reach out to say hello and to see how you're doing.

Our Stated meetings are _ (Day of the month) _ . It would be a pleasure to shake your hand and introduce you to everyone. If transportation is a challenge, we can arrange for one of our Brothers to pick you up.

I would also like you to know about the West Virginia Masonic Outreach Program. They are the charitable arm of the Grand Lodge and partner with us in support of our members, should assistance be needed. They can be reached at toll free 1-800-366-8384.

If you need anything, please give me a call. We are here for you and your family. My number is _____ and my email is _____.

A Brothers' bonds is for life. Know that we're here for you.

Fraternally,

(Name)

Worshipful Master

(Lodge Stationary)

Sample Lodge letter to recent Widow

(Date)

Mrs. _____
(Street Address)
(City, State Zip)

Dear Mrs. _____

On behalf of all the members of your husband's Lodge (Lodge name and #), please accept our condolences at this time of your great loss.

As Masons, we are concerned with the general welfare of our Brother members, their wives, widows and families, and hope that you will allow this Lodge to continue to be a part of your life. There are events which have been especially planned to include the Ladies. You will be informed of them from time to time and we encourage you to participate.

I would also like you to know about the West Virginia Masonic Outreach Program. They are the charitable arm of the Grand Lodge and partner with us in support of our members, should assistance be needed. They can be reached at toll free 1-800-366-8384.

(This space is left to encourage personalized comments relative to the decedent or his family.)

Brother _____, who is a member of our Lodge, will phone you in the near future to give you additional information.

If you need anything, please give me a call. We are here for you. My number is _____ and my email is _____.

Sincerely yours,

(Name)
Worshipful Master

Notes











West Virginia Masonic Outreach Program

Our Mission: West Virginia Masonic Outreach Program, by creating a culture of philanthropy, invests in youth and education, provides comfort and support for seniors and those in need, and preserves and shares the Masonic Heritage of West Virginia. We are a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Masonic Outreach Program

When selecting the WV Masonic Outreach Program, you're working with professionals in a fraternity that has for hundreds of years cared for older adults. You'll experience our emphasis on quality of life, and our culture of doing right by others. This is why so many call upon a Mason when in times of need and when looking for someone they can trust. You'll see these qualities exemplified in our Coordinator as we partner with you and your loved ones to deliver the right care at the right time.

Program Purpose

The Masonic Outreach Program's purpose is to help individuals age in place in their home for as long as they can. We provide direct care in helping individuals find their path to age in place, and, when needed, coordinate the necessary support agencies that enable living at home and transitions to and from care facilities.

Services Provided

Assessment & Plan – Partnership with you to develop a personalized plan for aging in place.

Direct Support & Assistance – Home visits, phone visits, and on-going assistance.

Home Modification Assistance – Home repairs (minor) for seniors and people with disabilities.

Care Coordination – Coordination of necessary supports that enable you to live at home.

Masons Care

West Virginia Masonic Outreach Program

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