



Guide for Careers In Senior Living





Introduction

There's a great need for quality, dignified, person-centered senior care in Cincinnati, Louisville, and the surrounding Tri-State region right now. The Baby Boom generation has reached peak retirement, and many of these older adults require services like assisted living and long-term care to maintain their independence and quality of life.

The demand for senior healthcare isn't expected to subside as Boomers' numbers diminish, though. Americans are living longer so, according to the Population Reference Bureau, the number of Americans ages 65 and older is expected to double from 52 million in 2018 to 95 million by 2060. Therefore, the United States will always need qualified individuals to care for our nation's elderly.

Here at Episcopal Retirement Services (ERS), our goal is to help Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana seniors "live well into the future." We need help in that mission, so we're continually looking for experienced, passionate healthcare, wellness, and care-giving providers to join our team.

Let's take a closer look at the state of senior care in the United States and explore some opportunities available at ERS.

Why should you pursue a career in Senior Care?

It's true there is a high demand for senior care providers in the United States, but that's not the only reason why professionals should consider a career in the industry. There are plenty of benefits of pursuing a career in senior care.

1. Senior care positions generally have higher earning potential.

Like we said before, the supply of retirement caregivers is too small to meet demand.

Senior care organizations like Episcopal Retirement Services are building more affordable senior apartments and residential nursing capacity. However, the labor market simply isn't supplying enough qualified, licensed home health nurses, patient care assistants, physical/occupational/respiratory therapists, senior wellness and nutrition experts, geriatricians, etc., right now to staff them all.

So, for the foreseeable future, elder care providers are likely to command higher average wages and realize more attractive benefits than their counterparts in other healthcare niches.

2. You can learn a lot about life when you work with seniors.

One of the most amazing benefits of working in elder care is the opportunity to hear our residents' life stories and learn from their shared wisdom.

Older people have hard-earned wisdom. And they often have a deep desire to pass on their wisdom to younger members of society.

Our elder care residents talk with us. They help us to avoid the mistakes they made when they were our age. Sometimes, they volunteer their personal stories. Sometimes, we just learn from listening and observing.

Older people advise us on how to handle trying circumstances. They show us how to accept adversity with grace and show us how to grow stronger from it.

Our senior residents help us to understand the true value of achievement. And they truly inspire us. Hear some of our residents' stories for yourself at: youtube.com/@episcopalretirement.

3. Older people have a positive outlook.

Many healthcare professionals and home health providers are affected by compassion fatigue and burnout.

But, as practitioners of senior care, we can testify: people often “mellow out” as they age. Most lose their sense of self-importance. They become focused on their immediate surroundings. They're less concerned with proving their place in the larger world.

So, when we help an elder, they often thank us, without reservation. They smile. They're grateful knowing they're cared about. And we're grateful for the opportunity because it makes us feel good in return.

4. Senior care professionals develop meaningful care relationships with residents.

In the hospital, providers don't tend to develop friendships with their patients. They often see people for a short period of time, then those patients move on.

In eldercare, though, we often care for patients for years. We get to know them well. We meet their spouses, their children, and their grandchildren. Sometimes, we even meet their great-grandchildren.

In eldercare, we develop care relationships that enrich and shape our own lives. It's an intangible career benefit, but for many of us at ERS, it's the most important one.



How to prepare for a career in Senior Care

If you have an interest in senior care, you may be wondering, “what do I need to do to become a qualified candidate?” Are there specific courses I should take? Do I need to be a licensed healthcare provider, or are there non-clinical roles that I could function in?

Here at ERS, we get questions like this all the time.

The fact is, there are a wide variety of jobs that fall under the category of “eldercare.” And, no, not all of them are roles that must be filled by clinicians.

What should senior care professionals major in?

There’s no question that there’s a critical need in the United States for new doctors—especially, as our population ages, geriatricians, and primary care physicians.

The great news, if you’re planning to go to medical school, is that you can really major in just about anything. That’s provided you knock out your core science requirements like biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, physics, and calculus, and do well on the MCAT.

Many medical programs, in fact, now give a little more preference to humanities majors. That’s because most medical school applicants today are STEM majors, and many programs view humanities majors as more empathetic and well-rounded than their math-and-science peers.

If four years of medical school, four years of residency, two years of fellowship training, and expensive tuition aren’t appealing to you, though, fear not: the senior care industry needs nurses and support clinicians, too.

Nursing and licensed therapist programs (physical therapy, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy, speech pathology, etc.) are fairly cut-and-dried, in terms of their course requirements. And any accredited, reputable program will prepare you well, from the standpoint of medical competence.

What additional classes should senior care professionals take?

It might be helpful to augment your scientific and clinical courses with courses that would help you better understand your future patients' mindsets. Psychology and sociology courses—especially seminars that focus on aging and issues related to aging—could be immensely helpful.

So, too, could courses that explore the human condition: literature, history, art, and philosophy, for example. That might seem a bit counterintuitive because you're not likely to find such courses specifically focusing on the elderly, but they could help you develop your own emotional intelligence, which will certainly help you in your work.

They'll also help you to develop your reasoning and analytical skills, which will make you more observant. It's critically important to be able to pick up on minute changes in your senior patients' day-to-day health or behavior.

And you might mix in courses in social work, for example you'll find it helpful to understand how to connect your senior patients, or their family members, with community-based resources. In practice, the lines between clinicians and social workers often get blurred.

What level of education do senior care professionals need?

It should be noted that master's degrees are becoming increasingly common among nurses and therapists, so to keep pace with other applicants in the field, you might want to apply to programs that offer accelerated post-graduate degrees.

To truly stand out, though, you'll need to be able to demonstrate a passion for delivering person-centered, dignified care. And, again, this is where humanities courses could really help you.

Most older patients are, for their part, incredibly grateful and rewarding to work with. But many of them—especially in residential elder care or residential memory care—are frail and highly vulnerable. The best senior care providers exhibit watchful vigilance, steady patience, and generous empathy.

What other types of careers are available in the senior care industry?

ERS is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization specializing in senior care, offering retirement community living, in-home services, community outreach such as meal support through Meals on Wheels and Swipe and Dine, and memory support programming through ERS' Center for Memory Support and Inclusion (CMSI). It takes many different types of team members with various skills for the organization to run smoothly.

If you're a business major, you might work in marketing or finance for a senior care system. You'd specifically want to know what seniors' health care needs and lifestyle preferences are like, so again it might be helpful to augment your normal business courses with psychology and other humanities courses.

Healthcare administration majors who are looking toward a career in senior care might want to pair their normal courses with a project management certification, such as Six Sigma, or with courses in finance or accounting. You might also want to develop your comfort and familiarity with peer-reviewed medical and business literature so that you can stay ahead of medical tech and health business trends.

The senior care industry is growing and ERS, like many other retirement care providers around the nation, is building out more resident capacity. If you want to aim for a leadership role with a retirement care provider, it would be helpful to understand the ins and outs of commercial development.

If you'd like to work in a hands-on, but non-clinical capacity, there's a great need for patient care assistants (for which you'd need certification in some states).

And there are many roles in elder care that require nothing more than a high school diploma or vocational training: cooks and dining service attendants, maintenance staff and groundskeepers, Meals On Wheels personnel, administrative assistants and more.



The ERS Difference

Episcopal Retirement Services has proudly served seniors for over 70 years now. In a sometimes challenging industry, we've managed this feat by being intentional. We're intentional about our communities and programs, our team, our partners, and our mission. We provide a range of services for our residents and those in our local city-wide communities, so we have team members in a range of positions that require varied skills, backgrounds, and ambitions.

While our positions vary, we have a few key elements that are consistent throughout each of our positions. The most important of these is our care model. We are person-centered. We treat our residents and program participants with the dignity and compassion they deserve. We give them as much freedom and choice as possible. We care for them. They care for us. We care for each other.

The ERS leadership team has put a significant amount of time and energy into creating a community atmosphere that fosters our culture. Our values of collaboration, kindness, and helpfulness to coworkers are not just written in a handbook—they're lived throughout work.

It is because of this culture and our person-centered model that our organization not only has exceptionally high career longevity, but we've also been named Top Workplace for nearly 20 consecutive years. We're proud of our longstanding legacy in our communities and are thrilled to welcome more passionate individuals to our team.

Contact Information

From our clinical providers to our allied health professionals and support staff, we have one goal: to help Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana seniors continue "Living well into the future."

Do you have a passion for rendering person-centered, dignified care and support? If so, we invite you to explore the opportunities here with us. Scan this QR code to see our available roles and learn more. If you have specific questions, you can also fill out an information request form.



Our mission:

We enrich the lives
of older adults in
a person-centered,
innovative, and
spiritually-based way.

ERS

Episcopal Retirement Services

✦ Deupree House ✦ Deupree Cottages ✦ Episcopal Church Home
✦ Marjorie P. Lee ✦ Deupree Meals On Wheels ✦ Affordable Living

Episcopal Retirement Services
CENTER FOR
MEMORY SUPPORT
AND INCLUSION

✦ Living Well Senior Solutions
✦ ERS Support Services

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