

All about the.... **Time Trade Circle**®

What's the Time Trade Circle?

The Time Trade Circle (TTC) is a “time bank” located in the greater metro area around Cambridge-Somerville.

What's a time bank?

It's a membership organization where people give and receive hours of time.

How does it work?

When you do an hour of work for someone, an hour gets added to your account. When someone else does an hour of work for you, you spend an hour – it gets taken out of your account and added to theirs.

What's in it for me?

People join time banks for many reasons.

- To get help with things they can't for themselves.
Some members don't have cars, and sometimes need rides. Some have big projects that they need many hands for. Some need help with specialized skills and services. Some have unexpected needs for help due to injury. The Time Trade Circle has a growing community of friendly helpers!
With the Time Trade Circle, you can call on many types of help from other members in your community!
- To learn new skills
Lots of members offer lessons in many areas – many kinds of cooking, many languages, musical instruction, dancing, etc. You can check out the huge list of lessons, and you can also post requests for the kind of instruction you are looking for!
- Some people are looking for a way to volunteer, and help others in their community.
You might wish you could help out others, with some of the gifts and time that you have, but you don't want to make a long-term steady commitment at a regular time.
With the Time Trade Circle, you can check the lists of help that people need, and contact the ones you'd like to do.
- It's a great way to meet new people!
Some members are new to the area, and would like to meet more friendly neighbors, and get to know new friends. Others may have retired, or friends may have moved. The Time Trade Circle lets you meet new friends and do useful things at the same time.
- Keep your skills current & get more experience.
Some people have been laid off from their regular job, or don't have as much work as they'd like. Volunteering your time in the Time Trade Circle lets you keep working in your field, and you get hours in the bank, in exchange. You can then use those hours for other help that you need. At the same time, you can continue to practice your skill, gain experience, and let more people know about you.
- It's a babysitting network!
You can meet with other parents and plan babysitting help.
- Do something different than you do in your regular work!
Some people may have a regular job that's sitting at a desk or in front of a screen all day. In that case, they may welcome the chance to get dirty in their spare time, and help someone rake, or shovel snow, or clean basements, or paint a room, etc.
- Get “paid back” for the kinds of favors you are already doing for neighbors, friends, family
Are you the type of person who is always offering to help others, and you feel happy to do it, but sometimes you feel you can't ask for help back? The Time Trade Circle lets you use all your good instincts for helping, and also be able to receive interesting kinds of help in exchange!. Pretty neat!!
- Feel free to get help with stuff, instead of worrying about asking the same friends.

Wow! this sounds awesome. ;) How do I sign up?

To sign up, you need to attend an orientation meeting. We have these about twice a month. To see the locations and times, go to our web page www.TimeTradeCircle.org and click on “Join”. That page lists all the upcoming orientations, and tells what town they are in.

When you join, you create an account on the website, where you list what you offer, and what you are requesting. You can change these at any time, in fact, it’s important to keep things updated! After that, you can begin trading!

Ok – what are your top tips for making my Time Trade Circle experience good?

- Tell more people! The larger the TTC, the easier it is to find what you need, and find customers for your offers. And it helps build neighborhood networking.
- Give useful details on your listings – good descriptions make people likely to contact you.
- Change your listings when you think of new things you want to offer or request. Take requests off when you don’t need them any more. This way, when people check the listings, they are valid and up-to-date.
- Communicate clearly about time and expectations when you’re setting up a trade, to make things go more smoothly.
- Use your own good judgment, as you would in any other situation, when you make arrangements with other members.
- You can send us particular requests to be included in our weekly email bulletin, as space permits. This lets other members earn hours, and gets you help in a timely fashion!
- Read through the weekly bulletin for people who need help- this helps people out when they need it, and also lets you earn hours.
- Don’t forget to spend your hours! Try out some new things, and help others earn hours at the same time.
- If you have questions about any of the aspects of TTC, let us know.
- Come to potlucks sometimes to meet other members in person, set up trades, and get to know the group.
- If you need help with your account, or with making trades, or are feeling confused, contact one of our Ambassadors – they help new members arrange trades, or set up their account. They are listed on the website.

troubleshooting

Q: I went to help someone, but it took longer than we planned. I didn’t know what to do.

A: Always discuss the amount of the time commitment with the trading partner, when you set up the trade. If that activity might vary in time, discuss how you’d both like to handle that, too. It’s best to agree on this ahead of time.

In the same way, if things take longer once you’ve started, you can discuss it then. It’s ok to limit how much time you want to spend on something.

Q: There’s a lot of things that other members are offering that I’d like to try, but I don’t have many hours in my account. Nobody is requesting my services yet!

A: The fastest way to earn hours is to look through other people’s requests, and earn hours by doing those services. And notice what requests come out in the weekly emails – those are always current!

You can also read through other offers, and look for ideas to make your own offers clearer, or give more detail, etc, so that people might try them.

In addition to updating your offers, you can enter new services.

Finally, sometimes there are tasks you can do for TTC, like distributing flyers to public locations, or helping set up at potlucks.

Q: I have a great skill or service that I'd like to offer, but I'm afraid too many people would request it, and it would be overwhelming.

A: No problem – you never have to accept a request when it is not convenient, and you yourself decide whether you'd like to do your service 1 hour a month, or 3 times a week – it's completely up to you. Some times you may be more busy, and have to decline requests. other times you may have lots of time. Any level of involvement is fine – no minimum; no obligation!

FAQ

Q: I'd like to charge more time for my service offer (because it's great, or because usually it's pretty expensive if you pay cash, or because it's popular, etc) – Can I charge 2 hours for one hour's worth of my service?

A: No – the time bank concept is based on the principle of treating all hours of work equally. So an hour of babysitting is worth an hour, and an hour of piano lesson is worth an hour, and an hour of computer consulting is worth an hour.

On the other hand, if there is other time spent by you in order to do the service, that time definitely counts as part of your time doing the service!

Some examples:

- You give haircuts, and you will spend ¼ hour cleaning up after.
- You are helping someone at their house, and the travel to get there takes you 30 minutes.
- You use ½ an hour to greet, set up, and clean up for each appointment for your service.
- You used time to research or prepare, in addition to the time you spent doing the service.

All of these can count as part of the time of your service.

As always, you should communicate about the amount of time, *before* the trade happens!!!

Q: Someone said that TTC is in “Cambridge & Somerville” – but I live in the suburbs. Can I join?

A: Yes, welcome! The TTC started in the Cambridge/Somerville area, and at least one of our monthly orientation meetings is held in this area, near the T, but we have hundreds of members in other metro communities, in fact, up to an hour from the metro area in any direction. People in any nearby location who would like to be a member of our time bank are welcome. Also, you can encourage more people in your own area to join, and develop a larger base of TTC members there, for you to trade with.

Helping the **Time Trade Circle (TTC)** grow and work well

You can help the Time Trade Circle reach out to new members by spreading the word to your friends, co-workers, housemates, neighbors, members of groups like temple, church, book club, gym, work friends, etc. The TTC website has several types of flyers which you can print out and post, or distribute.

Some good places to put them:

- food coops
- grocery stores, neighborhood stores, small restaurants that have bulletin boards or places to leave flyers
- local library branches
- cafes

If you want to organize a TTC orientation in your area, you can ask us about coming there to give an orientation. You should have 15-30 people who want to attend, and an accessible location.

Also- it's great to help organize events for TTC members in your town or neighborhood. Tell us your ideas first. You might have potlucks, or host other get-together events. This builds your own community network.