

# RSVP VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



## Help Us Help Your Neighbors

**Washington County Commission on Aging, Inc./Area Agency on Aging**

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*Susan Hurd, RSVP Program Manager*



**AmeriCorps**  
Seniors



# Welcome!

## WHAT IS RSVP?

RSVP stands for Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. It is a national program designed to provide challenging, rewarding and meaningful opportunities for people aged 55 and older to actively and positively impact their community through volunteer service.

Despite the name, you don't need to be retired or consider yourself a "senior" to participate. Some are interested in an area similar to their areas of expertise and some are looking to explore something entirely different. Some enjoy multiple assignments and some enjoy just a few hours each week. All volunteers aim to give to others and share a common goal of bettering our community.

## WHO CAN JOIN?

Anyone who is at least 55 years old and willing to share their time and talents to serve their community may become an RSVP volunteer. No experience or special training is needed. People from all walks of life are encouraged to join our group of devoted volunteers.

## WHAT IS A STATION?

A volunteer station refers to any organization or agency that has a formal, written agreement with RSVP to work with RSVP volunteers. Each station has a volunteer supervisor who acts as the regular contact person for that station. Along with other responsibilities to RSVP, stations agree to provide a safe environment, training, supervision and support for volunteers.

## ORGANIZATION

RSVP is federally sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service and locally, by the Washington County Commission on Aging, Inc./Area Agency on Aging through which county and federal funding is distributed.

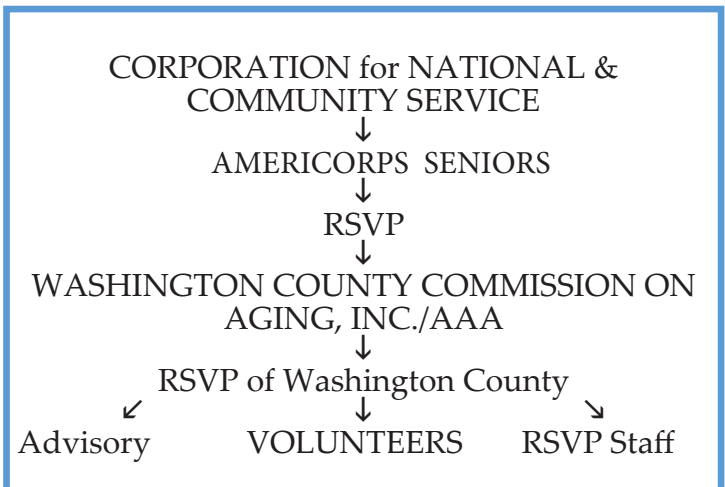


*RSVP is an invitation to serve...*

## WHAT IS AN ASSIGNMENT?

Volunteer assignments are matched to the interests and abilities of volunteers. Some people enjoy sharing their skills and experience from past employment while others enjoy exploring something entirely different. Prospective volunteers are strongly encouraged to share their areas of interest so staff will be able to arrange

## Help Us Help Your Neighbors





# Benefits

## POSITIVE IMPACT

Volunteers benefit from knowing that their time and talents will leave a positive impact on their community by working toward a common goal along with RSVP staff and their stations.

Each year, RSVP staff, along with station staff, are required to measure this by comparing planned impact to actual impact each year and reporting the results. Volunteer cooperation is essential to our efforts. Volunteers can expect to experience gratitude in many forms and the satisfaction that their roles in our community are priceless.

## REIMBURSEMENT

Annually, grant reimbursement opportunities are reviewed to determine availability and eligibility. RSVP volunteers may be entitled to claim reimbursement for travel expenses incurred during service: travel to and from station. Mileage is on a per mile basis while parking, bus and taxi expenses are on an actual cost basis, within limits. Reimbursement as well as monthly maximums are subject to change based upon availability of funds, RSVP's financial condition and the volume of claims. In the past, RSVP funding has allowed reimbursement on a regular basis, but this may not always be the case. Although, we know that volunteers are "serving from the heart"

**HOW IT WORKS:** Travel expenses must be recorded in the reimbursement column on sign-in sheets, must coincide with dates of service, be verified, signed and dated by station supervisor. Sign-in sheets must be filled out completely, legibly signed and dated by both the volunteer and the station representative. Reimbursement involves multiple departments; checks are mailed as quickly as possible. Important: The RSVP office must receive sign-in sheets no later than the 5th of each month - no exceptions.

## RECOGNITION

Recognition, both formal and informal, is an integral part of RSVP. Volunteers are honored each year at an event where they can enjoy refreshments, share experiences with others and continue learning about best practices, as well, as opportunities.

## INSURANCE COVERAGE

Every RSVP volunteer is covered by excess accident insurance (up to \$50,000/accident with \$2,500 for loss of life) and personal liability insurance (up to \$1,000,000/incident) by Corporate Insurance Management (CIMA). Drivers are also covered by excess automobile liability (up to \$500,000/accident).

### HOW IT WORKS:

Coverage is in effect during service hours only and not while traveling to or from volunteer stations. Proof is required that the volunteer was actually serving as an RSVP participant at the time of the accident, so it is mandatory that sign-in records be maintained by volunteers in their own clear, legible handwriting.

All volunteer-related accidents, major and minor, should be reported immediately to the RSVP office and a report will be filed.

In the case of a vehicle accident, the volunteer is required to supply a copy of the police accident report. After the volunteer's primary and secondary insurance has paid, a claim will be filed with CIMA to reimburse the deductible and balances per coverage guidelines.

Eyeglasses that are broken while volunteering are covered up to \$50 each for frames and lenses. In addition, dental care is covered up to \$500 per tooth for accidental injury to sound natural teeth and dentures.

# Responsibilities

## RSVP'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Recruit and place volunteers in assignments consistent with their interests and demonstrated community need.
- Collect and measure impact and other data for RSVP reports to further program goals.
- Keep registered volunteers informed of program policies, activities, educational materials and updates through direct contact, the WCCOA website and/or various social media, email, postal mail, etc.
- Furnish accident, personal liability and excess auto liability to registered volunteers while they are on duty.
- Issue limited travel reimbursement when requested and available, with appropriate documentation and according to program policy.
- Provide volunteer recognition consistent with program guidelines.
- Mediate disputes involving volunteers, staff and/or station personnel.
- Maintain grant reporting & integrity.

## STATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- Establish and fully abide by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with RSVP.
- Provide a Job Description with specific duties for each volunteer.
- Approve placement of volunteers.
- Provide orientation, training, supervision and support to volunteers.
- Verify monthly hours, sign and forward sign-in sheets to the RSVP office before the fifth of each month.
- Cooperate with collection of impact and other data for RSVP reports.

## VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Complete and sign the initial registration paperwork required: Application, Background Check Authorization, Background Check Personal Information, Job Description (when placed), Copy of Driver's License or ID, other paperwork as required or requested.
- Agree in writing to allow RSVP to conduct a Background Check and National Sex Offender Registry Check.
- Use a Sign-In sheet to track hours served, get verification and signature from station representative, sign, and return either through the station or on own so they arrive at the RSVP office by the fifth of each month. Sign-In sheets may be mailed or emailed to Susan Hurd: [shurd@wccoaging.org](mailto:shurd@wccoaging.org)
- Abide by all policies, rules and regulations of RSVP and the station served. Cooperate with the collection of impact and other data needed for RSVP reports.
- Notify the RSVP office immediately in the event of an accident or incident of any type.
- Notify the RSVP office promptly of any change in contact information, emergency contact person, beneficiary, etc.
- Notify the RSVP office promptly of the need to change placement, suspend service or resign.
- Honor the agreed-upon commitment to volunteer in a consistent, dependable and reliable fashion. Behave in a professional, polite manner and maintain confidentiality when appropriate.
- To provide an updated volunteer job description to the RSVP office with changes to existing volunteer job assignments
- Volunteer to follow vaccinations policies as set forth by the WCCOA Board of Directors

*The heart of a volunteer is never measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others. —DeAnn Hollis*

# Volunteer Hours

## WHY ARE VOLUNTEER HOURS IMPORTANT?

The Federal Government requires us to keep track of volunteer time to assess our program performance. A record of volunteer hours allows us to provide required qualitative data to funding agencies. A record of hours and types of service helps provide valuable information to legislators who use it to determine RSVP funding nationwide.

Volunteer Sign-In Sheets offer proof of eligibility for RSVP travel expense reimbursement and insurance coverage.

RSVP Volunteer hours help tell the true story of active individuals who generously share their time and talents to make our community better.



## SIGN-IN PROCEDURE

If the station where you serve maintains an RSVP Sign-In Book, record your hours in that book. The station supervisor will submit the information to RSVP before the fifth of each month.

If the station where you serve does not maintain an RSVP Sign-In Book or if your duties are performed without reporting to the station location, it is your responsibility to account for your own hours on Sign-In Sheets. At the end of each month, you must submit these sheets to the station supervisor for approval. After they are approved and signed, either the station or the volunteer must send or deliver the Sign-In Sheets to the RSVP office before the fifth of each month.

Hours may be delivered, mailed, faxed to (301) 739-4957 or submitted by email to [shurd@wccoaging.org](mailto:shurd@wccoaging.org). Additional Sign-In Sheets may be obtained from the RSVP office or downloaded online at [www.wccoaging.org](http://www.wccoaging.org)



# Prohibited Activities



Citation: • 42 U.S.C. 12584a

While volunteering within an AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise performing activities supported by the AmeriCorps program or CNCS, staff and members may not engage in the following activities:

- a. Attempting to influence legislation;
- b. Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- c. Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
- d. Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- e. Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
- f. Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
- g. Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
- h. Providing a direct benefit to—
  - i. A business organized for profit;
  - ii. labor union;
  - iii. partisan political organization;
  - iv. nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 related to engaging in political activities or substantial amount of lobbying except that nothing in these 9 provisions shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
  - v. An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph 3.g. above, unless CNCS assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
- i. Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
- j. Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
- k. Such other activities as CNCS may prohibit.

AmeriCorps members may not engage in the above activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-CNCS funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so. To report violations, refer to the Commission on Aging's Whistleblower policy.

# Other Policies



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## **HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBILITY**

It is expected that RSVP and Stations will maintain programs and assignments that are accessible to persons with disabilities, including mobility, hearing, vision, mental and cognitive impairments or addictions and diseases and, further, provide reasonable accommodations to allow qualified persons with disabilities to participate in service.

## **NON DISCRIMINATION**

RSVP and Stations will not discriminate against RSVP Volunteers on the basis of race, color or national origin, including limited English language proficiency, sex, age, political affiliation, religion or disability.

## **BACKGROUND CHECK & NATIONAL SEX OFFENDER PUBLIC REGISTRY**

All volunteers must give written consent and required information to have their name and information submitted for this review. Other reviews may apply.

## **TERMINATIONS & RESIGNATIONS**

The RSVP Volunteer, Station Representative or RSVP Director may terminate a volunteer's assignments at any time. Discussion of termination or resignation may be requested by any party to clarify the reason or to resolve any associated conflict. RSVP may contact Volunteer to conduct an exit survey.

## **NON-SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES**

RSVP Volunteers will not conduct or engage in sectarian, religious or political activities.

## **NON-PROFIT STATION STATUS**

All RSVP participating Stations must be a private or public non-profit agency or proprietary health care facility.

## **ASSURANCE OF VOLUNTEER SAFETY**

All volunteer stations must provide for adequate safety of volunteers including but not limited to providing safety information and training as necessary.

## **NON-DISPLACEMENT OF WORKERS**

RSVP Volunteers will not be assigned to any position which would displace employed workers or impair existing contracts for services.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY/PRIVACY/HIPPA**

Volunteers must abide by confidentiality, privacy and HIPPA regulations, laws and standards set forth by the Corporation for National and Community Service, Washington County Commission on Aging, Inc./AAA, RSVP and the Volunteer Station.

## **FEE FOR SERVICE**

Volunteers do not receive a fee for service from service recipients, their families, clients or the Volunteer Station. (Payment, tips, gifts, etc.)

## **APPEALS & GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

All Appeals for action affecting an RSVP Volunteer must be made in writing to the RSVP Director. The RSVP Advisory Council will review the complaint and if necessary, conduct an investigation with the appropriate persons. The Council will determine what action should be taken to correct the situation. The RSVP Director will respond in writing to the appealing volunteer explaining the Council's decision and necessary action within five business days of the decision.

## **DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY**

Using or being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol while volunteering is strictly prohibited and is cause for termination.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Become familiar with your station's inclement weather policies. If there is inclement weather or poor travel conditions, please use caution and good judgement. Please notify your station if you will be absent due to the weather.

## **POLICY CHANGES**

Policies in this guide are subject to change without notice. The most recent version of the RSVP Volunteer Handbook is posted on the WCCOA website at - [www.wccoaging.org](http://www.wccoaging.org)

**MORE POLICIES CONTINUED ON BACK. . .**

## CONTINUED POLICIES...

**WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY:** This policy is intended to encourage and enable volunteers to raise concerns so that the Compliance Officer can address, and correct, inappropriate conduct. With this in mind, no volunteer who, in good faith and supported by reasonable substantiation, reports a concern shall be subject to retaliation. A volunteer who retaliates against someone who has reported a concern will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including dismissal from the volunteer position. Please note that reported concerns and any related investigations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation. For more information please refer to the Whistleblower Policy.

**DEI:** The Washington County Commission on Aging is committed to promoting diversity, equity and fostering inclusion among our volunteers and throughout our organization. We value the difference of each client, volunteer, and staff member. We will strengthen our agency by celebrating our uniqueness and creating a lasting impact in our community. Let's take a moment to define our terms and reaffirm our belief in diversity, equity, and inclusion. DEI Defined: Diversity is the presence of differences within a given setting. Equity is the process of ensuring that processes and programs are impartial, fair, and provide equal possible outcomes for every individual. Inclusion is the practice of ensuring that all people feel a sense of belonging in the workplace. Simply stated, the Washington County Commission on Aging (WCCOA) is committed to increasing the presence of differences within our organization. The WCCOA is dedicated to the practice of increasing equity across all processes and programs. The WCCOA is committed to fostering an expanding atmosphere where all people experience belonging.

# Thank you for joining our team of dedicated Volunteers!



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