



# RSVP

## Lead With Experience

# RSVP VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

**The Retired Senior Volunteer Program  
Of Dutchess County**

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) promotes the concept of productive aging; providing individuals age 55 and older the opportunity to perform meaningful work to their communities and the residents within these communities. RSVP volunteers, utilizing opportunities to make a difference, provide major cost savings to non-profits and municipalities, while making a significant impact on meeting the critical needs of their communities.

The purpose of RSVP is to provide meaningful volunteer opportunities to older adults in Dutchess County; employing their wide array of skills and talents to assist in meeting the needs of the Dutchess County community and its residents. RSVP encourages seniors and retirees to offer their skill set, talents, and knowledge to assist in filling the service delivery voids in our community.

Without the assistance and dedication of our RSVP volunteers, Dutchess County agencies, organizations and residents would not be able often times to continue many of their services, and the needs of many of our residents would go unmet.



## OUR **RSVP VOLUNTEERS ARE:**

**R** Responsible

**S** Supportive

**V** Versatile

**P** Passionate

## *RSVP of Dutchess County*



Sponsoring Agency, Dutchess County Community Action Partnership  
Elizabeth Carlton Spira, Chief Executive Officer



## **Greetings and Welcome to RSVP!**

As a member of RSVP you are now part of the largest volunteer group of Americans 55 and older in the United States.

You've gained a lifetime of experience. Now is the time to put your skills and talents to good use by volunteering through RSVP. When you become a member of RSVP, you join the ranks of nearly 500,000 volunteers across the countries who are tackling tough issues in their communities. In 1969, the United States Congress passed legislation under the Older Americans Act, creating the Retired Senior Volunteer Program. RSVP is administered nationally by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Locally we are sponsored by Dutchess County Community Action Partnership and the New York State Office for the Aging. Since its creation, RSVP has had over 900 volunteers annually working at non-profit agencies and organizations throughout the county. These dedicated individuals have given hundreds and thousands of volunteer hours over thirty three years, enhancing the quality of life to residents living in Dutchess County.

RSVP offers a full range of volunteer opportunities with thousands of local and national organizations. With RSVP, you choose how and where you want to serve. You choose the amount of time you want to give. And you choose whether you want to draw on your skills or develop new ones. In short, you find the opportunity that's right for you. With RSVP, you'll receive pre-service orientation, training from the organization where you serve, and supplemental insurance while on duty.

This RSVP Volunteer Handbook was prepared to acquaint you with all aspects of our program in Dutchess County. We hope you find this handbook helpful in answering your questions about RSVP.

RSVP is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the Dutchess County Community Action Partnership (DCCAP), and the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA)

If you should have any questions after reading the handbook, please contact the RSVP office by calling 452-5104, ext. 109, or email us at [RSVP@dutchesscap.org](mailto:RSVP@dutchesscap.org). Our office is located at 77 Cannon Street, Poughkeepsie, 12601.

And remember; when you volunteer, you're not just helping others—you're helping yourself. Volunteering leads to new discoveries and new friends; and studies show that volunteering helps you live longer and promote a more positive outlook on life.

So get involved, and join RSVP today!

Deborah Wilkins Flippin

Director, RSVP Dutchess County



## RESPONSIBILITIES OF RSVP VOLUNTEERS

### **When accepting a volunteer assignment you are responsible:**

1. To attend orientations and training held by RSVP and your volunteer stations.
2. To arrive on time.
3. To “sign in” in order that hours can be accurately and timely recorded.
4. To call your station if you are unable to volunteer on a certain day. Please give as much notice as possible so that arrangements can be made for a substitute.
5. To notify your station(s) if you expect to be away from your volunteer responsibilities for an extended period of time.
6. To ask questions of your volunteer supervisor if you don't understand any of your volunteer assignment responsibilities.
7. To report all accidents. Remember RSVP carries secondary volunteer insurance and The RSVP office will file a claim on your behalf if notified of an accident. This insurance is secondary to the insurance that you already carry. (See Insurance Section on pages 6 and 7 in Volunteer Handbook).
8. To call the RSVP office if you have any problem regarding your volunteer assignment that cannot be resolved with your station supervisor, or if you would like to add or change your assignment.
9. To call if you have a change of address or other a change in your contact information such as a phone number or email change.
10. To keep confidentiality. All information on clients, patients, and agency/organization business is private and must not be discussed with anyone, not even your family members.



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

As a RSVP volunteer you may choose from a wide a variety of volunteer opportunities such as meal delivery and preparation, tutoring adults and children, friendly visiting and doing errands for elderly neighbors, providing managerial skills to non-profits, assisting with environmental projects, and much, much more.

Contact your RSVP Office for a listing of volunteer stations and opportunities. If you would like, or are interested in a particular position that is not on the listing, please inquire. We would be happy to research for you and to identify new volunteer opportunities whenever possible.

## NEWSLETTER

When a volunteer joins the RSVP organization he/she will automatically receive a copy of our bi-annual newsletter, "Volunteer Voice." Inside each issue there will be a *Volunteer Spotlight* Section, highlighting a RSVP volunteer who has been honored or received some form of commendation, recognition, or has achieved a significant milestone in their life.

Also included will be a listing of current volunteer opportunities, RSVP feature stories, helpful hints, health articles, and numerous other newsworthy items specifically chosen for you, our RSVP member.

## MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

RSVP volunteers are eligible to receive reimbursement for travel to and from their stations(s) for up to \$25 per month. Mileage reimbursement rate is \$.20 per mile. Those volunteers providing transportation for two or more other volunteers to their work sites, or other RSVP functions, may be reimbursed, but still not over \$25 per month. For information on the current reimbursement rate or to obtain mileage sheets, please contact the RSVP office at (845) 452-5104, ext. 109.

## OTHER TRAVEL INFORMATION

If a volunteer does not have their own transportation, RSVP will reimburse them for public modes of transportation to and from the volunteer station not exceeding \$25 per month.



## VOLUNTEER INSURANCE

In order to minimize risks associated with volunteering, all non-profit agencies that utilize RSVP volunteers have signed an agreement, a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) to be an RSVP station. These agreements are kept on file in our office and updated annually.

While volunteering at these designated stations, your RSVP insurance is in effect. If you assume additional volunteer opportunities at a site where we do not have a MOU, under these circumstances you will not be covered by RSVP insurance. Also if you take on addition volunteer work, and we are not notified by you of this additional assumption of volunteer work and the station has not been notified that you that you are a RSVP member, you will not be covered by RSVP insurance

All insurance provided by RSVP is secondary to your current provider. RSVP volunteers are covered by three types of insurance:

### **Accident Insurance:**

Under this policy all volunteers are covered for personal injury occurring while on a volunteer assignment. The insurance applies while traveling directly to and from the assignments and while participating in an activity that is RSVP sponsored. This includes volunteer service, attending recognition events, Advisory Council, or committee meetings, orientation and training meetings.

The medical indemnity of the accident portion of the accident insurance covers medical or surgical expenses incurred for one year from the time of injury, providing treatment begins within 60-days after the accident. There are also benefits to teeth, dentures, and eyeglasses. These benefits apply only in excess of those provided b your own insurance.

### **Personal Liability Insurance:**

All registered volunteers collectively are provided additional liability per occurrence for a personal injury or a property damage liability arising from the performance of volunteer duties. This non-contributing coverage is in excess of any other valid and collectible insurance the volunteer may have.



### **Principal Exclusions to Personal Liability Insurance:**

- Injury or damage arising out of the use of an automobile, aircraft, or watercraft.
- Personal injury resulting from an assault and battery committed by or at the direction of a volunteer.
- Property damage in the care, custody, or control of the volunteer. The Volunteer Excess Personal Liability coverage is protection should the volunteer injure another person or damage another person's property during their volunteer activity – **NOT** while the volunteer is driving. The limit of liability is \$100,000 each occurrence limit.

### **Excess Auto Liability:**

Protection under this form of insurance covers you for bodily injury or property damage liability resulting from the use of your own automobile in connection with RSVP work. The limit includes driving directly between the volunteer's workstation and residence. This insurance is in excess of an amount equal to the applicable limit of liability of any other insurance collected by the insured.

Principle exclusions to Excess Automobile Liability Insurance:

- This insurance does not apply to damage to the volunteer's automobile.

### **How to File a Claim:**

If you have an accident which results in personal injury to yourself, you can obtain a claim form from the volunteer office. Please notify staff at your volunteer station and the RSVP office in order that proper incident reporting can take place. When you have completed your claim form, return it in a timely fashion to the RSVP office with the proper documentation.



## RECOGNITION

RSVP volunteers contribute thousand of hours of service each year to the residents and not-for-profits in Dutchess County. As a small display of our appreciation for their dedication and service, RSVP hosts an Annual Recognition Event. All **active** volunteers who are enrolled in RSVP are invited at no cost to the volunteer event. **Volunteers are considered active if they have served within the most recent 90-day period.** Only active RSVP volunteers can attend at no cost; volunteers not meeting the above requirement may attend, but at their own expense. Spouses, relatives and friends who are not **active volunteers may attend, but at their own expense.**

It is our policy to make the general public aware of RSVP volunteers and its mission through an on-going promotional and marketing campaign. This includes newspaper and web site articles on individual and group volunteer work, as well as incorporating other media vehicles to promote our program and its volunteers.

## ORIENTATION/EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

RSVP provides basic orientation for all new volunteers, and each RSVP station provides orientation and on-the-job training for new volunteers.

### IMPORTANT

**RSVP Volunteers cannot perform the duties of an employed worker or an activity that will result in the displacement of an employee, or receive a fee from service recipients, their family or guardians.**

**RSVP volunteers are not authorized to conduct or give religious instructions while volunteering for RSVP.**

**Grant funds are not to be used to finance labor or anti-labor organizations or labor activity. RSVP volunteers accumulation of hours will exclude any political organizing, voter registration, poll watching, driving people to the polls, or any other electoral activities. In other words, these activities can not be executed while volunteering under the auspices of RSVP.**

**Volunteers may not work under the auspices of RSVP in private clubs and RSVP can not discriminate in its policies and procedures.**



## **VOLUNTEER SEPARATION**

Volunteers who do not report at least one hour during a 90-day period become inactive in the RSVP organization. They will be temporarily withdrawn from the RSVP membership rolls in accordance with project policy on volunteer withdrawal. They may be re-instated upon resumption of active volunteer service. Withdrawn volunteers will be reinstated upon calling the RSVP Office when willing and able to resume volunteer activity, or if informed by Volunteer Station Coordinator.

The RSVP Director may separate a volunteer from the program for cause, including, but not limited to, excessive, or unauthorized absences, misconduct, inability to perform assignments, or inability to accept supervision.

A volunteer station may separate, or ask the RSVP Director to separate a volunteer for cause, including, but not limited to, extensive or unauthorized absences, misconduct, inability to perform assignments, or inability to accept supervision. Separation may also be based on termination of volunteer assignment or when the volunteer assignment is no longer meaningful or satisfying to RSVP volunteer.

## **VOLUNTEER DISSATISFACTION**

Please notify your Station Supervisor of any problems with your assignment, volunteers, or agency personnel. Unresolved issues or problems should be reported to RSVP Office Staff. Please do not leave the organization without notifying Station Supervisor and RSVP Office.

## **UNRESOLVED VOLUNTEER DISSATISFACTION AND APPEAL PROCESS**

Volunteers, who remain dissatisfied having taken the above steps, may request their problem be heard by the Executive Committee of the RSVP Advisory Council.

The Executive Committee of the Advisory Council will:

- Receive written complaint from the volunteer within 30 days of incident and a written report from RSVP Director regarding the complaint and actions already taken. Prior to this meeting RSVP director will meet with appropriate parties.
- Meet to review written complaint and Director's Report.
- Set up an appointment to meet with volunteer and advise of what steps will be taken if any, and notify volunteer within 30 days of submission of complaint..



## Call the RSVP Office If You:

1. Want to change or add additional volunteer assignments.
2. You have an accident while volunteering.
3. You have a question regarding your hours.
4. You have submission of article or ideas, or want to write a story for the bi-annual newsletter.
5. If you are aware of an illness or hospitalization of a fellow volunteer.
6. If you have received special recognition or training from your station.
7. You have suggestions to improve our organization.
8. You just want to talk; we will make time for you because you make time for us.
9. Need additional forms for your hours or mileage.

### RSVP REMINDERS

- Make sure the Volunteer Coordinator where you volunteer knows that you are a RSVP volunteer.
- Make sure that your volunteer hours are entered each month on the RSVP Volunteer Time Sheet.
- Or if you prepare your own time sheet, that you mail it in promptly.
- Make sure you let your Volunteer Coordinator know if you are unable to continue volunteering.

### PROGRAM EVALUATION

We are always looking for ways to improve RSVP. As part of our Continuous Improvement Process we are always inviting our volunteers, recipients of service, and community partners to have direct input in the future of our program. Evaluations are conducted to see if we have met our goals and addressed critical needs in the community. Annually we will be sending out forms to various stakeholders in the community. Please fill these evaluations out and return them to the RSVP Office. We appreciate and value your input.



## **RSVP VOLUNTEERS BRING JOY BY USING THEIR TALENTS, THEIR TIME, AND THEIR TREASURES**



**TO HELP OTHERS!**

**Dutchess County RSVP is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, Dutchess County Community Action Partnership and the New York State office for the Aging. RSVP does not discriminate on the basis of, and serves all people regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender or disability.**