

# Sullivan County

## RSVP

# Volunteer Handbook

## Policies & Procedures



This program is funded by  
Corporation for National & Community Service  
New York State Office for the Aging  
&  
Sullivan County



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## Mission Statement

The Retired Senior Volunteer program places interested persons in meaningful volunteer opportunities. The volunteers share their time, experience and knowledge with others in their communities. Volunteers age 55 or older, retired or not, who have some time to share and would enjoy assisting others so as to strengthen the ties that bind us together as a community.

### RSVP Staff:

Retired Senior Volunteer Project Director .....Caryn Mathews  
Retired Senior Volunteer Specialist.....Elaine Finkle

### **You may contact us at:**

845-807-0251

or

845-807-0255

We are located in the Sullivan County Government Building,  
100 North Street, Monticello, New York 12701  
Stationed in the Office for the Aging.

### Welcome

RSVP is so glad that you are here. You've gained a lifetime of experience. Now is the time to put your skills and talents to good use helping others in your community. 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.

Through RSVP, you are a part of a nationwide movement with a vital tradition of helping others build strong and healthy communities. As an RSVP member, you will meet many new people, discover ways in which your life experiences can improve the quality of life for individuals, and have opportunities to serve and get involved.

In return for your time and energy as a RSVP volunteer, you will make new friends, learn new skills, remain a vital part of your community and be recognized for your efforts. When you volunteer, you're not just helping others, you're helping yourself. Volunteering leads to new discoveries and new friends. Research has found that volunteering provides older adults, with benefits that include improved physical and mental health and greater life satisfaction. Plus, studies show that volunteering helps you live longer and promotes a positive outlook on life.

## RSVP Program History

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program was established in 1971 and is now one of the largest senior volunteer organizations in the nation, involving more than 500,000 individuals age 55 and older in a very broad range of activities, RSVP is one of the three branches of the National Senior Service Corps, which is a part of the Corporation for National and Community Service. The other two branches of Senior Corp are Foster Grandparent Program and the Senior Companion Program.

The goal of RSVP is to help local communities by encouraging people age 55 and over to volunteer and serve. RSVP volunteers choose how, where, and how often they will serve. Many contribute a few hours a week, others 40 hours or more a month. It's all up to you. Studies show that continued activity and community involvement throughout one's life affect health in a positive way.

### What is a Volunteer Station?

A volunteer station is an organization where a RSVP member volunteers their time. It must be a **non-profit organization**. The station must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which establishes the responsibilities of both RSVP and the station with respect to RSVP volunteers. By signing the MOU, the RSVP station agrees to develop volunteer assignments that impact critical human and social needs, and regularly assess those assignments for continued appropriateness; and to designate a coordinator who will serve as a contact person for both the volunteer and the RSVP office. The station will provide assigned RSVP volunteers the following support: all assignments will be explained, orientation to station and appropriate in-service training to enhance performance of assignments and provide resources required for performance of assignments. While on assignment providing for the supervision and safety of the RSVP volunteers assigned to it is also the responsibility of the station. The undertaking of any other responsibilities as may be necessary to the successful performance of RSVP volunteers in their assignments or as agreed to in the Memorandum of Understanding. In addition, every RSVP station will provide a written job description for all of its volunteer assignments to clarify what the volunteer assignment entails, record and log volunteer hours, sign time sheets, sign mileage vouchers, and send in any necessary data or information to the RSVP office on a monthly basis. A site visit for compliance with MOU will occur on an annual basis or as needed via visit or teleconference with station manager. If a station is found to be non-compliant with the terms of the MOU and with the Best practices stated in this handbook, any issues occur for any reason; a meeting with the station and Project Director will be requested to clarify, revamp or terminate a station.

## Enrollment and application process

### The RSVP process of enrolling new volunteers:

- ✚ RSVP staff, either in person or over the phone, provide basic information regarding the RSVP program.
- ✚ A detailed discussion will then take place to determine the volunteer's specific interests, talents, skills, type of work they may have done in the past, and any volunteer experience.
  - The type of volunteer work there is an interest in.
  - How much time can be devoted to the volunteer station.
  - The location of the station, and travel.
- ✚ The individual will then complete the RSVP Application form, and provide basic information, which will include emergency contacts, driver ID and driver insurance policy information, Office for the Aging (Sponsor) senior ID card and statement of felony convictions if any...etc. A background check might be necessary for certain stations to be determined by RSVP and the station.
- ✚ It will then be indicated on the above Application form where the volunteer will be stationed.
- ✚ RSVP staff then contacts the RSVP Station regarding the volunteer's potential placement. (Based on the outcome of the discussion, RSVP staff will set up an appointment for the volunteer to meet with a representative of the community non-profit agency). RSVP stations are asked to confirm with RSVP when a volunteer starts, so that the RSVP office may begin to keep track of their hours and give credit for volunteer hours served.

## Reporting Volunteer Hours

- Volunteer hours served by the RSVP member are to be reported on a monthly basis. These hours are recorded at the volunteer station, reported on the RSVP attendance sheet and submitted to RSVP by the volunteer station via mail: using email or scanned fax (depending on the station\*\* as a backup in lieu of original copy delivery. See below).
- Each station is to report the number of clients served on the attendance sheets. Making sure volunteers sign in at volunteer station to ensure accurate recordkeeping.
- All Volunteers will receive timesheets from the RSVP Office: many stations will have a group roster/time sheets sent to them which will require you to sign in each time you volunteer. Volunteers can request their own time sheet be sent directly to their home (just make sure the station representative signs it before submitting along with mileage reimbursement sheets (**original documents only can be submitted for mileage**)).
- If the volunteer assignment is from the volunteers home ex. (telephone "Touchstone" or needlework) an attendance sheet will be sent to the volunteer from the RSVP office for logging in hours. RSVP Coordinator will act as the volunteer station representative you may send it back via mail or scanned fax or email, for **HOURS ONLY**.

- Volunteers should check with their volunteer station to make sure the station is reporting the volunteers correct hours to the RSVP office monthly. This will ensure full credit for hours served.
- **Monthly** reports are necessary for RSVP volunteer medical transportation reimbursement, for monthly reports of transports by the RSVP office. **They must be signed by their volunteer station representative at RSVP for accuracy of data collection.**
- Logging in hours and reporting reimbursements for mileage (on a volunteer's personal vehicle) on a monthly basis is important to maintain insurance benefits. **All reimbursements must be signed by their volunteer station representative.**
- **\*ORIGINAL documents (no copies or faxes) must be submitted. Reimbursement logs must be received with a two month window after accrued or they will not be paid.**
- A packet of Hard copy group sign in sheets and mileage reimbursement sheets will be mailed out quarterly either to their home or station if you require additional copies please call our office.
  - (a) Hard copy time sheet will be returned to our office as proof of hours and must be signed by the authorized station representative in order to be accrued or used as mileage reimbursement documentation.
  - (b) E-mails relating to a volunteer's hours are sent by an appropriate, authorized person – e.g., the volunteer's supervisor or the volunteer.
  - (c) Telephone report by volunteer supervisor or volunteer with written confirmation to follow is acceptable for HOURS ONLY.
  - (d) Fax or Scan is only accepted for reference of hours original copies are needed for mileage reimbursement signed and authorized by the station representative
  - (e) If hours are submitted via e-mail by the RSVP volunteer or the volunteer station supervisor it is for documentation only there must be a hard copy sent to substantiate hours and for mileage reimbursement:
    - (1) The e-mail is addressed to the person identified by the RSVP/sponsor policies as having the authority to accept and view e-mails reporting hours.
    - (2) The system used by the e-mail recipient (i.e. RSVP Project Director) is capable of storing and retrieving the e-mails reporting RSVP volunteer hours.

### **Transportation Reimbursement**

RSVP volunteer members are eligible to receive reimbursement for travel costs with the use of their personal vehicle to and from their volunteer assignments or station (based on *GOOGLE* maps). Transportation may be reimbursed at the IRS mileage rate, (which changes every January you will be informed of rate changes as they become available).

Volunteers will be paid for the first 5 trips with a maximum of up to 200 miles per month. **RSVP volunteers who do medical transportation and meals on wheels delivery have unlimited mileage reimbursement. All mileage vouchers are to be turned in before the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month following. Only one month should be on each voucher. All travel vouchers must be signed by their volunteer station representative (Volunteers please sign original documents in BLUE ink ONLY). Travel reimbursement checks take AT LEAST 3 WEEKS to be processed from the time that a travel voucher is received by RSVP. NOTE: all vouchers submitted on December 2nd WILL NOT BE PROCESSED UNTIL THE END OF JANUARY. ALL medical transporters must have current signed Job Positions on file.**

## RSVP Volunteer Responsibilities

Once you have agreed on a volunteer activity that suits your interest, you will receive a brief orientation from the RSVP staff and then additional instruction and supervision at your volunteer station.

Upon accepting a volunteer assignment at the RSVP station we ask you to:

1. Be on time for your assignment.
2. Arrive at the agreed upon time. Be prepared to begin your assignment.
3. Notify your station supervisor if you will be late or unable to come in the day that you are scheduled. (Give advance notice of planned absences, for example vacation, medical appointments etc., enables the supervisor to arrange coverage).
4. Maintain client, patient, and maintain agency CONFIDENTIALITY at all times.
5. Submit reimbursement forms and your time sheets for signature in a timely manner.
6. Medical Transport Drives please refer to your manual.
7. When you are at your volunteer station please get permission for any guests you might have to either visit or accompany you from both the station manager and the RSVP Program Director. No Children under 18 years old may accompany Volunteers while doing transports or be transported without approval.
8. Prohibited Activities:
  - A. **Religious Activities: RSVP volunteers may not conduct or engage in religious activities while on duty as an RSVP Volunteer**
  - B. **Political activities of RSVP volunteers may not conduct or engage in political activities while on duty as an RSVP Volunteer:**
    1. Electoral activities
    2. Voter registration
    3. Voter transportation to polls and
    4. Efforts to influence legislation.
  - C. **Displacement of Employees: The Volunteer Station will not assign RSVP volunteers to any assignment which would displace employed workers or impair existing contracts for services.**

### RSVP TERM DEFINITIONS:\*

**Assignment:** refers to the activities to be performed by the volunteers identified in a written outline or job description. Assignment refers also to an action designation or assigning the volunteer to functions or responsibilities. (An assignment cannot include any political or religious activities.)

**Placement:** is the referral on an RSVP volunteer to a volunteer station for assignment in response to a request for a volunteer by the volunteer station.

## Recruitment

RSVP recruits members through volunteer job postings, media items, flyers, word of mouth, and other outreach forums throughout Sullivan County or on the web at:

<http://getinvolved.volunteermatch.org>. If you know of anyone who would like to volunteer but they just don't know where to start or would like some assistance in finding volunteer opportunities, please have them contact the RSVP office at:

845-807-0251 or 845-807-0255. Today could be the first step in a journey that could change a life.

## Volunteer opportunities

As a RSVP volunteer member you may choose from a wide variety of volunteer station options (we will provide a full list of current stations during your initial sign up interview). You decide where, when and how many hours you wish to serve. We will guide you to the best volunteer opportunity for you.

**There are many opportunities available for you.**

## Inactive Volunteers

The Corporation for National and Community Service requires that volunteers who are inactive for 90 days may be withdrawn from RSVP. If you are ill or have been hospitalized, our staff will do everything possible to stay in touch with you. If you are going out of town for more than 90 days, please let us know and advise the RSVP office when you will return **to remain active**.

## Call the RSVP office...

845-807-0251/845-807-0255

- When you want to a change or add another volunteer assignment
- You have a problem with your volunteer assignment
- You have an accident
- You have a question about your hours
- You have suggestions to improve our program
- You are aware of an illness or hospitalization of another volunteer
- You are unable to volunteer because of illness, travel or other reasons
- You are able to resume volunteer activity
- You want to refer someone to RSVP
- Your volunteer station is holding a recognition or training
- **WHEN** you just need a friendly person to talk to

## Volunteer Dissatisfaction

If a RSVP volunteer has a problem that cannot be resolved by talking to your station supervisor, contact the RSVP Project Director at 845-807-0251. The Director will try to resolve concerns of the volunteer. The same resolution will be to resolve problems that the stations may be experiencing. All concerns are confidential and



will be handled as quickly as possible. If you are not satisfied with the resolution, you may address your issues with the RSVP Advisory Committee. Your concerns should as always be put in writing.

### **Volunteer Termination:**

Reasons for Termination: A sponsor may remove a RSVP volunteer from service for cause. Grounds for removal include but are not limited to: extensive and unauthorized absences; misconduct; inability to perform assignments; and failure to accept supervision.

### **Appeal procedures from such adverse action (Termination):**

#### **1. Misconduct:**

- A. If there is any substantiated proof on behalf of the volunteer station/supervisor for termination due to misconduct such as: HIPPA violation, abuse of any nature, stealing or victimization to any degree.  
**Termination is upheld No Appeal will be granted.**
- B. If there is any substantiated proof on behalf of the volunteer station/supervisor for termination due to misconduct. **Termination can be Appealed make sure that all of your explanations be put in writing.**
- 1. Any non-disclosed felony incidents not reported upon application or occurrence to RSVP. Any felony or incarcerations while current volunteer status is immediate grounds for termination.**
- 2. Extensive and unauthorized absences; Inability to perform assignments; and failure to accept supervision:**
- A. **Extensive and unauthorized absences:** See section regarding inactive volunteers more than 90 days are inactive. If volunteers are unable to comply with site requirements due to resolvable issues or re-assignment to a more appropriate placement will be required.\*
- B. **Inability to perform assignments:** If volunteers are unable to comply with site requirements due to training issues training will be provided if re-training is not sufficient a more appropriate placement will be required.\*
- \*Termination from RSVP program can be Appealed re-assignment to a more appropriate placement will be required. Please make sure that all of your explanations be put in writing.**
- \*\* Other grounds for Termination will be handled on a case by case basis based upon this Appeal process.**
- 3. Stations will be monitored annually for compliance with MOU; via visit or teleconference. Stations will be informed of all current policies: changes etc. In a timely fashion.**

### **RSVP Supplemental Insurance**

*RSVP carries three categories of insurance to protect its volunteer members while at their assigned volunteer stations or while traveling to and from assigned stations. There is no cost to the volunteer member for this insurance coverage.*

- A. Accident Insurance: All RSVP volunteers are covered for personal injury occurring during their volunteer assignments.

- B. The **CIMA** insurance applies while traveling directly to and from the RSVP work station and while participating in an actual RSVP assignment. This insurance includes orientation, actual volunteer service, meal periods while volunteering, and recognition, attendance, training, and Advisory Council meetings. These benefits apply only in excess of your own insurance. Accidents and/or injuries should be immediately reported to the RSVP office. (845) 807-0241.
- C. Personal Liability – This coverage protects volunteers for a personal injury or property damage liability claim directly related to the performance of their volunteer duties.
- D. Excess Automobile Liability – Protection under this form of insurance covers the volunteer for bodily injury or property damage liability arising from the use of their own vehicle in connection with volunteer work at a RSVP station. This coverage is in excess of the auto insurance that the volunteer carries as an individual. **The Cima insurance policy is available in the RSVP office.**

### Recognition

RSVP members contribute thousands of hours of service each year to the people and agencies of Sullivan County. We sincerely appreciate the tremendous donation of time, energy, talent and skills of our RSVP volunteers. Therefore, the RSVP office expresses its gratitude along with the community at large in recognizing all of the activities and volunteer service at an annual Recognition Gala that is held each year by invitation. We are grateful for your service and dedication we hope you will honor us with your presence at that event.

### RSVP Advisory Committee

The Sullivan County RSVP Advisory Committee is comprised of representatives from the 15 townships in Sullivan County, community members who have an interest in the senior population as well as members of local collateral agencies. Each member is nominated by RSVP and appointed by the Sullivan County Legislature. The Advisory Committee assists with program development, policy and procedure which set the parameters for the operation of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program. This committee meets 8 to 10 times a year or as needed for fund-raiser events or special projects. If you are interested in being a member please request a specific Position Description.

#### RSVP Ensures That:

1. Neither grantee nor any Volunteer station requests or receives compensation from the beneficiaries of RSVP Volunteers.
2. A Volunteer stations financial support of the RSVP program is not a pre-condition for that station to obtain volunteers.
3. A RSVP Volunteer does not receive or accept a fee, tip for service recipients, their legal guardian, or members of their family, or friends at any time.

4. Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation: The Volunteer Station will maintain the programs and activities to which RSVP volunteers are assigned accessible to persons with disabilities (including mobility, hearing, vision, mental, and cognitive impairments or addictions and diseases) and/or limited English language proficiency and provide reasonable accommodation to allow persons with disabilities to participate in programs and activities
5. Prohibition of Discrimination: The Volunteer Station will not discriminate against RSVP volunteers or in the operation of its program on the basis of race; color; national origin, including limited English proficiency; sex; age; political affiliation; sexual orientation; religion; or on the basis of disability, if the volunteer is a qualified individual with a disability.

### *In Closing...*

Our hope is that you have found this handbook helpful and that it will encourage you to feel free to call our office with any concerns or ideas you might have. The RSVP office appreciates your commitment to volunteer service and hope that this experience will enrich your life and the lives of those you serve.

*We Thank for Your Volunteerism*

*Caryn Mathews*, RSVP Project Director

*Elaine Finkle*, RSVP Specialist

*Deborah E. Allen*, Director, Sullivan County Office for The Aging