

RSVP

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Of Allegany and Garrett Counties

Sponsored by Allegany County HRDC



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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WHAT IS RSVP?

RSVP is part of a national network of programs called Senior Corps that recruits adults 55 and older to use their talents and life experience to help meet community needs through volunteer service. RSVP offers maximum flexibility and choice to its volunteers as it matches the personal interests and skills of older Americans with opportunities to serve in their communities. Volunteers provide hundreds of community service hours across the United States.

RSVP of Allegany and Garrett Counties is a non-profit organization dedicated to meeting community needs in Western Maryland by placing volunteers whose wisdom can make a difference. On-going education and support for volunteers is an important component of RSVP. Through careful monitoring, data collection, and evaluation by program staff, volunteers know of the impact they are making in addressing an identified community need.

RSVP is sponsored by Human Resource Development Commission (HRDC). HRDC is a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of the people it serves. Program staff is responsible for volunteer recruitment, training, and recognition to ensure volunteers have a meaningful, purposeful, and rewarding experience.

Current RSVP programs include SHIP Programs, Meals on Wheels, Community programs like Allegany and Frostburg Museums, and Class Room Helpers that volunteer at Head Start Programs in both Garrett and Allegany Counties.



“Lead With Experience”



RSVP of Allegany and Garrett Counties
Human Resources Development Commission, Inc.
125 Virginia Avenue
Cumberland, Maryland 21502
Phone – 301-777-5970
FAX – 301-722-0937

Dear RSVP Volunteer,

Allegany County HRDC is pleased that you have decided to become a member of RSVP of Allegany and Garrett Counties. We never cease to be amazed at the number of local citizens that are so willing to serve others in our communities.

This Volunteer Manual was developed to provide you with a general overview of the RSVP program and the roles and responsibilities of the RSVP staff, the organizations where RSVP volunteers serve, and the volunteers themselves.

Our pledge to you is to do everything possible to make your volunteer experience rewarding and meaningful. Please feel free to call us with any questions, problems or suggestions you may have throughout your RSVP volunteer experience.

Again, thank you for sharing your experience and compassion for others to help tackle the difficult issues in your community.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Cassidy
RSVP Coordinator

Mission

The mission of RSVP of Allegany and Garrett Counties is to respond to priority community needs by providing meaningful and purposeful volunteer opportunities for persons 55 and over.

HRDC's mission is to eliminate social and economic barriers to promote individual and community stability through services, advocacy and collaboration. RSVP and HRDC are a perfect fit as both strive to address community needs through community resources.

National History

The Administration on Aging launched RSVP in 1971, allowing retired persons in America to continue leading active lives while contributing to the needs of the community in a meaningful way. Eleven projects were started in the summer of 1971. By 1974 there were 666 projects nationwide. In 1988, RSVP had grown to 750 projects supported by federal funding.

In 1993, RSVP became part of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), which is a federal agency. CNCS was created to meet the personal, educational, environmental, and public safety needs of the United States, and to encourage citizens to give full- or part-time service regardless of age.

Local History

Locally, RSVP was started in the early 1990's and was mainly based around Allegany County. Over the years RSVP has expanded volunteer opportunities in the county through community based programs. RSVP changed hands multiple times through the years, finally ending at HRDC in 2010. In 2011 RSVP became RSVP of Allegany and Garrett Counties. In 2012, RSVP started its first volunteer stations in Garrett County, and continues to expand programs in Allegany.

Organizational Structure



Sponsorship

RSVP of Allegany and Garrett County is sponsored by Human Resource Development Commission. HRDC serves as the fiscal agent for the program and employs program staff.

The RSVP office is located at the HRDC Building on the second Floor at 125 Virginia Avenue in Cumberland Maryland.

Advisory Council - Purpose and Function

The primary purpose of the Advisory Council is to monitor and review program development and assessment.

The Council is made up of key individuals from the community who have a passion for volunteering and a commitment to the mission of RSVP. Members study matters related to the program, make suggestions concerning the functions of RSVP, and provide support to the program as it serves volunteers, partner agencies, and the community.

The Council meets bi-monthly in Garrett and Allegany Counties. If interested in joining the Advisory Council or attending a meeting, please contact RSVP at 301-783-1755.

Volunteer Information

Who can become an RSVP Volunteer?

Anyone who is 55 and older with a desire to be involved with their community by sharing their skills and talents. There are no educational, income or experience requirements, nor dues or membership fees to join.

What can RSVP volunteers do?

In Western Maryland, RSVP has been concentrating on two areas of community importance. The first is congregate meals/food pantries for the elderly and needy. Volunteers can work at local food banks to help hand out food in the community or volunteer with the local Meals on Wheels program to make sure local seniors receive nutritional meals. The second is literacy and mentoring through local Head Start programs. Volunteers can mentor a child during school or help a child struggling with reading.

Volunteers are matched with opportunities based on personal preference and the nature of the position. Each opportunity has a description to clarify specific duties, the training required, location of the station, etc. Additional opportunities are always being explored.

What does RSVP offer active volunteers?

- The opportunity to learn new skills or enhance current skills
- Free supplemental insurance
- RSVP Newsletter
- Ongoing recognition

What are the benefits of volunteering?

- Help setting up a personal interview with the volunteer station you choose.
- On-going follow-up and support by RSVP.
- Supplemental insurance while you volunteer. This includes a \$5,000 life insurance policy and an accidental medical policy if something should happen to you on your way to, during, or returning from your volunteer assignment.
- Invitation to an annual recognition event.
- Social interaction and a chance to meet new people.
- An opportunity to learn new skills.
- A variety of volunteer opportunities, some on a one-time only basis.
- Flexibility to change your volunteer assignment whenever you want.

Volunteer Stations

What is a Volunteer Station?

A Volunteer Station is a public or non-profit entity that has a written agreement with RSVP to provide volunteer opportunities. RSVP volunteers help volunteer stations fulfill their mission and serve their clients whether it be students, residents, or community members with a need.

Volunteer Stations agree to provide a safe environment for RSVP volunteers and accept the responsibility of volunteer supervision. Key individuals from Volunteer Stations assist with volunteer training and recognition.

Fitting in at your Volunteer Station

Volunteer Stations appreciate and value the time and talent you offer. When volunteering, don't be shy...ask questions about the organization.

Below is a list of details you will want to know about the Volunteer Station:

- Know and understand your role at the Volunteer Station.
- Know what change you are working to create or the problem you are working to address.
- Understand the mission or purpose of the Volunteer Station.
- Know your supervisor and the station staff you work with. They will answer your questions and address any concerns you may have.
- Know what policies and procedures you are subject to as a volunteer, including the check-in procedure for your station.
- Learn the little things such as the location of the restrooms, coat racks, workspace, parking area, the lounge or lunch area, etc.

Policies and Procedures

Background Checks

Federal regulations provided by CNCS strongly encourage background checks be conducted on RSVP volunteers. Volunteer Stations will conduct any background checks they deem necessary. RSVP will conduct a search of the National Sex Offender Registry. These checks are to ensure and maximize the safety of volunteers and clients served.

Orientation and Training

RSVP staff will provide an orientation for new volunteers, which will cover an overview of HRDC and an introduction to RSVP. Before serving at a Volunteer Station, volunteers will receive training appropriate to their position. Training opportunities will also be provided throughout the year. All volunteers are strongly encouraged to attend all trainings.

Conduct

When volunteering, an RSVP volunteer must be in accordance with the Volunteer Station's guidelines for staff and/or volunteers. Any concerns regarding the guidelines should be taken to the station supervisor. If concerns are not resolved, please contact the RSVP Coordinator.

Please be on time. If you are unable to arrive at your scheduled time, please notify your station supervisor. If you are going to be absent, please follow the process outlined by RSVP staff for your volunteer assignment.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the cornerstone of a trusting relationship between volunteers, clients, Volunteer Stations, and RSVP. Some volunteer opportunities involve knowing sensitive information about the individuals being served. Issues or concerns regarding clients should only be discussed with the station supervisor or RSVP staff. It is important to never release the name, address, phone number or any other information that may identify the client to anyone except the Volunteer Station and/or RSVP staff. For your own safety, it is also important to only release personal details to RSVP and volunteer station staff.

Volunteer Status

A volunteer will remain active throughout the program year as long as he/she reports at least one hour of volunteer service. At the end of the program year, volunteers will be asked if they want to continue their volunteer service. At that time, they will choose to remain active, go on a temporary leave of absence, or terminate their assignment. Volunteers may also terminate their volunteer assignment at any time by notifying RSVP staff.

Once a volunteer is terminated, he/she is no longer covered by CBIZ insurance or eligible to participate in recognition events.

Reporting Volunteer Hours

It is very important that RSVP knows how much time you spend volunteering at your station. The Federal Government requires programs to keep track of volunteer hours as a means of assessing the program's performance.

Volunteer hours indicate that you are an active volunteer, which allows you to participate in recognition events and remain eligible for the excess insurance coverage. Volunteer Stations will collect and report hours to RSVP staff based on sign-in sheets in a timely manner. Volunteers are required to sign the time sheet and indicate the number of hours served.

Volunteer Safety Policy

Volunteer safety is important to RSVP. Concerns regarding safety at your volunteer station should be reported to the station supervisor and RSVP Coordinator as soon as possible. If you are involved in an accident while on assignment, please notify the RSVP office within 24 hours. Should your medical, physical, or other conditions change, at any time, it is the duty of the volunteer to inform the RSVP Coordinator so that appropriate changes may be made with regard to volunteer activities.

Inclement Weather

In the case of inclement weather or poor road conditions, please exercise caution. Use your best judgment in making a decision to travel to the volunteer assignment. Please notify the Volunteer Station if you will be absent due to weather.

Volunteer Insurance Service - CBIZ

All active volunteers are provided with excess accident medical, volunteer liability, and auto liability insurance, which supplements existing insurance policies at no cost to the volunteer. The coverage protects an RSVP volunteer during volunteer assignment (travel to and from the station, and while you are performing duties at the station). For volunteers using a personal auto, it is required to keep up-to-date the minimum levels of liability insurance by the State of Maryland.

In case of an accident, auto or otherwise, the volunteer should:

- Report the incident immediately to the RSVP Coordinator, who will in turn, notify CBIZ.
- File appropriate claim forms with their own primary insurance provider including Medicare or Medicaid.
- Keep insurance statement and itemized bills, as they will be needed to file claim.

Non-Discrimination Policy

No persons, regardless of race, religion, color, creed, gender, national origin, marital status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, or political affiliation shall be excluded from participating in RSVP.

Limited-English Speaking Volunteer Policy

HRDC, Inc. has utilized many efforts to ensure individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are aware of and can utilize services. The LEP Implementation Plan according to Federal Law-Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 supports these efforts. To determine what LEP services would be needed, a Four Factor Analysis was completed to determine the following: 1) The number or proportion of Limited English Proficiency persons in the eligible service population, 2) The frequency with which Limited English Proficiency individuals come into contact with the program, 3) The importance of the benefit, service, information, or encounter to the Limited English Proficiency person (including the consequences of lack of language services or inadequate interpretation/translation); and 4) The resources available to the recipient and the costs of providing various types of language services. Based on the results, LEP persons represent less than one percent (1%) of Allegany County residents. Given the limited need, HRDC works with CTS Language Link to provide telephonic interpretation services as needed. All agency staff has access to the service and information for the service is posted by all telephones. Additional efforts to establish access to services for LEP clients

are: posting of welcome signs in multiple languages in all centers, language identification flashcards and LEP Manuals made available in all centers and staff training to ensure staff are aware of techniques and information.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

The use of illegal drugs or alcohol, or being under the influence of the same, while performing hours of service is strictly prohibited and shall be cause for termination of all volunteer placements through the RSVP of Allegany and Garrett County.

Volunteer Termination

Volunteers may be terminated at any time by agency partners and/or RSVP. Grounds for termination may include, but are not limited to:

- Breach of confidentiality.
- Physical, mental or emotional inability to serve.
- Incompatibility with agency partners and/or RSVP staff.
- Offensive behavior, sexual harassment or workplace violence.
- Consumption of illegal drugs or alcohol immediately prior to or during volunteer assignments.

Appeal Process

All appeals to action affecting an RSVP volunteer must be made in writing to the RSVP Coordinator with a copy sent to the Chairperson of the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council will review the complaint and if necessary, conduct an investigation with the appropriate individuals, including the RSVP Coordinator and the volunteer making the appeal. Additional persons may be involved such as other volunteers, station and/or RSVP staff. The Council will determine what action should be taken to correct the situation. The Chairperson will respond in writing to the appealing volunteer explaining the Council's decision and necessary action.

Policy Changes

Policies in this handbook are subject to change without notice.

Volunteer Responsibilities

When accepting a volunteer assignment with RSVP, responsibilities include:

1. Attend the volunteer orientation and trainings.
2. Be on time.
3. Sign the RSVP time sheet so your hours can be properly recorded.
4. Notify your station if you will be absent.
5. Arrange for a substitute volunteer if you know you will be absent.
6. Ask questions at your volunteer station if you do not understand or are not sure about something. If you still have questions, please call the RSVP office.
7. If you are in an accident, notify the RSVP office and your station.
8. Keep station business and client information confidential.
9. Notify the RSVP office if you are having problems at your volunteer station.
10. Notify the RSVP office if there are changes in your contact information.

Prohibitions for RSVP Volunteers

1. Volunteers should not engage in nor grant funds be used for, any of the following activities:
 - Electoral activities
 - Voter registration
 - Voter transportation to polls
 - Efforts to influence legislation
2. Volunteers should not engage in any activity which would otherwise be performed by any employee or result in the displacement of any employee.
3. Volunteers do not receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardians, members of their family, or friends.
4. Volunteers do not give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or attempt to convert others to another opinion or religion.