



VOLUNTEER STATION HANDBOOK

Thank you for joining with us! We are proud to partner with organizations like yours to recruit volunteers to assist you in achieving your mission. Together we can make a meaningful and long-lasting impact on our community.

The United Way 55+ RSVP Program serves 3 counties—Johnson, Des Moines and Muscatine. Throughout these counties our goal is to engage more than 400 volunteers who serve in a wide variety of areas to meet critical community needs.

This information has been compiled to introduce you to the 55+ RSVP program, and will help you to become familiar with the operating guidelines both for our partnership and the volunteers you may be supervising. Please read this handbook and keep it handy to make your 55+ RSVP experience as impactful and rewarding as possible.

Please feel free to contact us any time.

55+ RSVP Program Overview & Structure

Purpose

To engage community members 55 and better in meaningful volunteer opportunities to meet critical community needs that impact and benefit citizens of all ages while providing a high-quality experience that will enrich the life of the volunteer.

Objectives

Fighting for the education, financial stability and health for everyone in our communities. We do this by:

- Supporting medical transportation for elderly and disabled
- Reading with kids in local schools
- Supporting communities in times of disaster through disaster preparedness
- Connecting volunteers to meaningful opportunities at area nonprofits and services and more

Data collection is an important component of United Way 55+ RSVP's Work Plans. We will be requesting data from you on the work RSVP volunteers are engaged in through your organization.

Definition of a Volunteer Station

A volunteer station is a public agency, private nonprofit organization, or proprietary health-care agency or organization that accepts the responsibility for assignment and supervision of 55+ RSVP volunteer.

CNCS Requirements

Special Limitation for 55+ RSVP Volunteers

1. **Political Activities: No Volunteer may be involved in political activities when serving in the capacity of a 55+ RSVP Volunteer.** No volunteer shall involve the use of funds, the provision of services, or the employment or assignment of personnel in a matter supporting or resulting in the identification of such project with:

- a. Electoral activities
- b. Voter Registration
- c. Voter transportation to the polls
- d. Efforts to influence legislation

On their own time, they may be as politically involved as they wish.

2. **Religious Activities:** 55+ RSVP Volunteers shall not give religious instruction, conduct service, or engage in any form of preaching as a part of their duties.
3. **Non-Displacement of Paid Staff:** 55+ RSVP Volunteers may not perform any service or duty or engage in any activity which would otherwise be performed by an employed worker, or which could supplant the hiring of employed workers.
4. **Non-Compensation for Services:** Under no circumstances shall a 55+ RSVP Volunteer receive a fee for service for their personal use from service recipients, their legal guardian, members of their family or friends. No person, organization, or agency shall request any compensation for services of 55+ RSVP Volunteers.

What 55+ RSVP Offers

55+ RSVP's Program Staff are experienced volunteer managers who know their local communities well and can effectively recruit and screen volunteers for referral to our community partners. We offer training to volunteers that varies depending on their volunteer assignment and will continually seek out opportunities to work with our community partners to offer training to all 55+ RSVP volunteers. We provide volunteer recognition in the form of annual events and more informal, ongoing recognition of volunteers through newsletters and local media. 55+ RSVP Program Staff are available to assist with communication and other issues that may arise between a 55+ RSVP volunteer and the community partner staff.

Supplemental Insurance

55+ RSVP volunteers are covered by supplemental insurance when they volunteer. Coverage includes accident medical, volunteer liability, and automobile liability in excess of any other valid and collectible insurance coverage.

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES

Providing Volunteer Position Description(s)

55+ RSVP needs a complete **Volunteer Position Description** for each position you seek to fill. This is an important document which will allow us to fully understand your volunteer needs and enable the 55+ RSVP Program Staff to be more successful in recruiting volunteers for your needs. An example volunteer position description is in the forms section, If you need any assistance, 55+ RSVP staff will help you.

Screening/Interviewing

When 55+ RSVP recruits a potential volunteer for your organization, we will send you a **55+ RSVP Volunteer Referral Form** which will have the potential volunteer's contact information, the position the volunteer is interested in, and any skills or experience that are relevant to the position. 55+ RSVP expects that you will contact the volunteer within **five (5) business days**. It is important that the volunteer be contacted quickly so they maintain their interest in volunteering and that they know their time and energy are valued. We ask that after conducting your typical volunteer screening process, whether or not that consists of a formal/informal interview, you report back to

the 55+ RSVP Program Staff within **three (3) weeks** and let them know if the volunteer is a good fit for your organization and will be placed with you, or if an alternative placement needs to be found.

RSVP does not conduct background screening of its volunteers, with the exception of those serving in 55+ RSVP Programs. If your organization requires a background check of volunteers it is your responsibility to conduct these checks.

Online Portal

Each Community Partner will have access to online 55+ RSVP portal where you will be able to see all of the information about the volunteers assigned to your station. The link is:

<https://www.volgistics.com/ex2/vicnet.d11/?from=428408>

Once you have signed the community partner Memorandum of Understanding, we will provide you with a username and password

Orientation & Training

55+ RSVP distinguishes between orientation and training and we strongly advise partners to provide both to new volunteers.

Orientation can be provided in both written and oral form, and should include a description of the function of your agency and the service(s) it provides, a tour of the facility, including where accessible lavatory facilities are located, and a review of the volunteer's job description.

Training will depend on the position. The more a volunteer deals with other people and makes decisions independently, the more training should be provided. Many community partners find on the job training to be most effective, while others prefer a formal training session. Time should be allotted after each session for evaluation.

Supervision

The community partner agrees to provide necessary supervision of 55+ RSVP volunteers. The amount of supervision depends on the volunteer's assignment.

The following are some suggestions for working with volunteers:

1. Designate one volunteer coordinator and additional supervisors as needed.
2. Make sure volunteers know what is expected of them.
3. Give volunteers a chance to prove themselves.
4. Make sure volunteers feel needed and appreciated.
5. Consider volunteers part of your team and encourage staff to do the same.
6. Invite volunteers to participate in team meetings and ask them for feedback.
7. Notify the 55+ RSVP Staff if a volunteer is found to be inappropriate for your organization.

Reports

55+ RSVP's continued federal funding through the Corporation for National and Community Service is dependent on the number of active volunteers, the number of hours served, but most importantly, **the measurable outcomes of the volunteers' efforts**. It is extremely important to 55+ RSVP that each of its community partners cooperate with our data collection policies.

Volunteer Hours

It is required that you report 55+ RSVP volunteers hours by the 5th of each month (for previous month's activities). An electronic form will be provided to you and you will email it to stacie.eastman@unitedwayjwc.org.

Volunteer Recognition

Your organization benefits from the time, energy, and expertise that volunteers offer and we ask that you provide ongoing recognition to your volunteers. This can be done in a formal manner, such as an Awards Dinner, Volunteer Tea, etc. You may also recognize volunteers in a simple, inexpensive manner all year long. A question about the volunteer's family, recent vacation or health shows you care about them as individuals. Birthday cards are well-received, and thank you notes for special service are appreciated. The words, "You're doing a great job" and "We really missed you while you were away," can mean the world to a volunteer.

When publicly recognizing 55+ RSVP volunteer contributions, please mention 55+ RSVP specifically. By doing this, you help raise the visibility of 55+ RSVP in our communities, and that helps all of us.

OVERVIEW OF 55+ RSVP VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the cornerstone of a trusting relationship between volunteers and clients. Volunteers agree to keep all information regarding the organization they serve, their clients and staff in the strictest confidence. No pertinent information obtained as a volunteer may be disclosed through verbal or written communication with anyone. **Breaching the code of confidentiality, as set forth by the 55+ Initiative, will result in the termination of all volunteer assignments.**

A breach of confidentiality may consist of:

- Talking about a client by name, with family or friends.
- Talking about a client in an inappropriate place.
- Talking about a client to his or her family members in an inappropriate place.
- Telling an inappropriate person, the names of clients.

Conduct

When volunteering, volunteers must be in accordance with the community partner's guidelines for staff and/or volunteer staff. This includes requirements for training, attendance, dress code or any other code or any other guidelines established by the partner agency. Any concerns regarding the community partner should be taken first to the partner agency supervisor/volunteer coordinator. If concerns aren't resolved, the volunteer will contact United Way 55+ RSVP.

Non-Discrimination

No person, based on race, color, sex, age (if at least 55), religion, handicap, national origin, military reserve or veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation or self identification, limited English proficiency, or political affiliation shall be excluded from participation.

Volunteer Safety and Safe Practices

Volunteers must be fit for the roles they perform to complete their jobs safely. Should medical, physical or other conditions change, at any time, it is the obligation of the volunteer to inform staff so that appropriate changes may be made regarding volunteer activities. 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 the cause for termination of all volunteer placements through the program.

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