

# Miles City RSVP STATION HANDBOOK

RSVP is sponsored by  
the City of Miles City

MILES CITY RSVP  
VA Medical Center  
210 S. Winchester Ave. Room  
225  
Miles City, MT 59301  
Telephone: (406) 234-0505  
FAX: (406) 234-0554

## **MILES CITY RSVP SPONSORSHIP**

The city of Miles City currently sponsored the Miles City RSVP Program. The Miles City RSVP program includes the cities of Miles City, Forsyth, and Colstrip.

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

RSVP is a program that finds meaningful significant volunteer opportunities for adults age 55 and over that utilize their talents, expertise, and life-long experiences to help address critical community needs. They work with children, the elderly and everyone in between as well as filling critical management and supervisory roles.

Volunteers come from all backgrounds and may be retired or employed. Volunteer assignments may be ongoing, sporadic or they may be short projects with a specific time limit. RSVP provides all its volunteers with a variety of choices, careful placement, on-going support, public recognition, additional insurance coverage while volunteering, and in some cases, reimbursement of travel and meal expenses. RSVP volunteers work with agencies that have a prior agreement with RSVP called "workstations". All assignments will have a written job description and clear expectations volunteers can understand. A RSVP staff member seeks out new volunteers, interviews them, and helps them find volunteer assignments matching their needs and interests. They search for the best volunteer opportunities with the organizations where RSVP volunteers are stationed to assure that the experience is mutually rewarding.

A RSVP staff member also works closely with our workstations to make sure that RSVP can help find volunteers to match your needs. The Coordinators will help you develop a volunteer position description that defines just what you need the volunteers to accomplish. This helps them search for the right volunteers to meet your needs. As new volunteer needs arise, the RSVP volunteer coordinators can help you recruit for those as well. Finally, the Coordinators can help you try to resolve any issues that arise with our volunteers who are placed with you.

## **VOLUNTEER BENEFITS THROUGH RSVP**

As the RSVP Workstation Representative for your organization, it is important for you to know the benefits that are available to RSVP volunteers.

In additions to a variety of volunteer opportunities to choose from, careful placement and ongoing support, the RSVP program provides volunteers with these additional benefits:

- **Insurance**

All RSVP volunteers are automatically covered by excess Accident, Personal Liability and Automobile Liability insurance while volunteering or traveling to or from their volunteer assignments. Note that this coverage comes into effect after the volunteer's own insurance has paid maximum. If there is any kind of incident where a volunteer is involved the workstation representative will be expected to maintain appropriate notes and records.

- **Recognition**  
RSVP holds recognition events every fall and several small events during the year. Usually, special attention is applied during National Volunteer Recognition Week. The Workstations are invited to attend some of these events.
- **Newsletter**  
There is a bi-monthly newsletter published by RSVP mailed to all volunteers and Workstations. It contains articles with information, education, and entertainment for RSVP members.
- **Volunteer Reimbursement Policy**  
Meal Reimbursement:
  - Due to limited resources, City of Miles City RSVP does not reimburse for meals associated with volunteer assignments.Travel Reimbursement:
  - Cab Fare paid for those volunteers that do not have transportation or if the weather is such that it would be a hazard to drive one's self to the workstation. In these cases the volunteer will call Badlands Cab to request transportation. Badlands Cab will bill RSVP.
  - It should be noted that dates on workstation timesheets MUST match the date of the cab ride. Cab rides can only be paid for actual travel to/from your volunteer workstation.

### **WORKSTATION CASH OR IN-KIND SUPPORT OF RSVP VOLUNTEERS**

- In accordance with 45 CFR 2553.91(c) a RSVP volunteer workstation may contribute to the financial support of the RSVP project. However, this support may not be a required precondition for a potential station to obtain RSVP volunteers. If a volunteer workstation agrees to provide funds to support additional volunteers or pay for other volunteer support costs (such as meals), the agreement must be stated in the written Memorandum of Understanding with the workstation.
- The sponsor of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program must withdraw services if the station's inability to provide monetary or in-kind support to the RSVP project under the Memorandum of Understanding diminishes or jeopardizes the project's financial capabilities to fulfill its obligations.

### **RECORD KEEPING**

RSVP operates by regulations established by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service. Those regulations require that certain records be kept. The necessary records are as follows:

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): federal regulations require that RSVP sign a MOU with each volunteer workstation BEFORE volunteers are placed at the workstation. The MOU outlines what each party to the agreement will do to

make the partnership work. Although the form looks complicated at first glance, it is fairly straightforward.

Timesheets: The time sheet is a very important tool for RSVP, the workstation, and the volunteer. This form allows RSVP and the volunteer stations to keep track of the hours served. This information documents the contribution RSVP volunteers are making and is a requirement by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

For the volunteer, the time sheet is vital to ensuring receipt of the program benefits of secondary insurance and if applicable, to reimburse Badlands Cab.

Please note that an accurate time sheet is needed with all RSVP volunteers serving at your workstation each month. **Timesheets are due by the 5<sup>th</sup> day following the month.**

Timesheets need to be filled out correctly and include the following:

- Station Name
- Station Supervisor Signature
- Volunteer Name
- Month and Year

RSVP will provide timesheets to the workstation, either electronic or hard copy.

Timesheets are kept at the workstation and submitted monthly by the workstation supervisor. Volunteers are responsible for signing the time sheet each time they volunteer. It should be noted that some workstations have their own timesheets and in an effort to make their jobs easier that timesheet may be submitted to the RSVP office. It should also be noted that some workstations have volunteers sign in using a time clock. This is also acceptable.

### **PROGRAMMING FOR IMPACT**

With the passage of the Government Performance Results Act of 1993 Congress required all federal departments, programs and grantees to document the impact of their activities on the persons they were designed to serve. To meet this requirement, the Corporation for National

Updated March 2011

and Community Service developed a Programming for Impact model for RSVP's nationwide to follow. Currently, RSVP's are required to have at least 50% of their volunteers engaged in outcome-based assignments in which the results of their work must be measured. These outcomes are tracked by using the workstations timesheets and entering the information on them into Volunteer Reporter software. It is important that accurate information is turned into the RSVP office in a timely manner as reports are completed quarterly using the information on the timesheets.

## **VOLUNTEER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Volunteers have the right to:

- Assignments that suit them
- Clear and specific instruction about their assignments
- Continuing staff support from RSVP
- Treatment as an equal co-worker
- The opportunity to offer their ideas and suggestions
- Regular appreciation for their efforts and accomplishments. RSVP staff can share ideas and, on some occasions, assist with the planning for on-site recognition events.

Volunteers have a responsibility to:

- Make a serious commitment to the assignment
- Be loyal to the organization, cooperate with the staff and abide by all rules and policies
- Be willing to learn and to ask questions about things they don't understand, to be "up-front" about their skills and limitations.

These rights and responsibilities are communicated to all RSVP volunteers when they enroll.

## **RSVP's CONTINUED ROLE**

RSVP volunteers are supervised by the Workstation Representative or another designated staff member at the Workstation where they are assigned. An RSVP staff member is available to provide support for both the Workstation and the volunteer. Occasionally problems may erupt where an outside perspective will bring a different view to the issues. RSVP will mediate if either you or the volunteer has a concern about his or her assignment or performance. Feel free to call upon the RSVP Coordinator for help at any time.

## **Volunteer Separation and Appeal Process**

### **Volunteer Separation**

- Volunteers, who are consistently inactive for one year will be withdrawn from active volunteer status. These volunteers may be re-activated upon resumption of volunteer service.

- The RSVP director may separate a volunteer from the program for cause, including, but not limited to, extensive 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 the RSVP volunteer.
- By policy, RSVP Workstations have the right to dismiss a volunteer from service within their organization according to the policies of those organizations. We hope that you will consult with the RSVP Coordinator prior to taking such action unless doing so would cause harm to the volunteer or to your organization. In that case, we ask that you contact the RSVP Coordinator as soon as possible.

### **Appeal Procedure**

- Any appeal of an adverse action affecting an RSVP volunteer must be in writing to the RSVP Director with a copy to the Chairperson of the Advisory Council.
- The Chairperson of the Advisory Council will conduct an investigation with the necessary individuals, including the RSVP director and the volunteer making the appeal. Other persons involved may be included as well as other volunteers at the workstation involved, RSVP staff and workstation personnel.
- The Advisory Council Chairperson will respond in writing to the appealing volunteer within three weeks. The Chairperson will state that either he/she agrees with the findings for termination or disagrees. Should the Chairperson state that he/she disagrees with the findings, he/she will also state what action is to be taken to correct the situation.

### **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY PLAN (EEOC)**

#### **And AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) COMPLIANCE**

By policy, RSVP Workstations are required to conform to all relevant civil rights and non-discrimination statutes. This includes the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (EEOC) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If RSVP volunteers feel that they have been discriminated against at their volunteer station, they may contact the RSVP Coordinator.

### **HISTORY OF RSVP**

RSVP was launched in the spring of 1971 with an appropriation of \$500,000 under the auspices of the Administration on Aging (AoA). In July of the same year, RSVP was transferred from AoA to the federal agency, ACTION, which had oversight of federal domestic volunteer programs. Eleven projects were started in the summer of 1971.

In 1993, the Corporation for National Service came into being when the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 was signed. This new Act lowered the age for

Updated March 2011

participation in RSVP form 60 to 55 and eliminated a requirement that volunteers no longer be in the workforce. Congress stated its expectations for the Corporation through a statement of purpose (42 U.S.C. 12501) that, in part included using national and volunteer service by Americans of all ages to:

- 1) Meet the unmet human, educational, environmental and public safety needs of the United States without displacing existing vendors;
- 2) Renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community throughout the United States;
- 3) Expand and strengthen existing service programs with demonstrated experience in providing structured service opportunities with visible benefits to the participants and the community; and
- 4) Provide tangible benefits to the communities in which national service is performed.

The operations of three entities came together to form the Corporation for National Service-ACTION (the federal Domestic Volunteer Agency), the Commission on National and Community Service, and the Office of National Service. The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program became one of three existing volunteer programs for older adults to be administered by the Corporation under the banner of the "National Senior Service Corps."