


RSVP Volunteer & Volunteer Station Handbook



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Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** 

RSVP VOLUNTEER & VOLUNTEER STATION HANDBOOK
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RSVP SPONSOR

RSVP is sponsored by the City of Miles City, and funded through the Corporation for National and Community Service. Additional funding for the program comes from fundraising, match monies, and in-kind donations. City of Miles City RSVP serves Custer, Carter, Fallon, Rosebud Counties and the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the City of Miles City RSVP is to engage persons 55 and older in volunteer service to meet critical community needs; and to provide a high-quality experience that will enrich the lives of volunteers.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

RSVP is a program that matches volunteers with volunteer stations in meaningful volunteer opportunities to help address critical community needs. Volunteers must be 55 years of age or older willing to serve your community, willing to accept instruction and supervision as required, capable of serving in a designated assignment in the RSVP service area, and willing to serve without a wage. Hours served vary depending on the RSVP member. There are no restrictions on the basis of education, income, experience, citizenship, race, creed, belief, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or political affiliations. There are no membership dues or fees for either volunteers or volunteer stations.

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 volunteers with a variety of choices, careful placement, on-going support, public recognition, supplemental insurance coverage while volunteering, and in some cases reimbursement of travel and meal expenses. RSVP volunteers work with agencies/volunteer stations that have a prior signed agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) with RSVP. All assignments must have a written job description and clear expectations volunteers can understand. RSVP staff member(s) work with volunteers to find a volunteer assignment matching their needs, skills, and interests to insure the experience is mutually rewarding for the volunteer and volunteer station. RSVP will help recruit volunteers for volunteer stations, and also help resolve any issues that arise between volunteers and volunteer stations.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Office Location: VA Medical Complex
210 S. Winchester Ave. Suite 226
Miles City, MT 59301

Telephone: 406-234-0505 Fax: 406-234-0554

E-Mail: rsvp05@midrivers.com

Website: rsvpmilescity.org

Staff: Betty Vail, Director

ADVISORY COUNCIL

An Advisory Council, of nine to fifteen members, provides input and support in areas of fundraising, publicity, volunteer recruitment, volunteer recognition, and program evaluation. The Advisory Council meets the third Wednesday of odd numbered months (January/March/May/July/September/November) at 12:15 p.m. in the City Hall Conference Room. The public is welcome.

VOLUNTEER AND VOLUNTEER STATION POLICIES

- **Volunteer Time Sheet Policy**

The time sheet is a very important tool for RSVP, the volunteer station, 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.

Requirements for Volunteers:

- 1) Time sheets must reflect accurate hours.
- 2) **Volunteers are responsible for signing the time sheet each time they volunteer.** It should be noted that some volunteer stations 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 volunteer stations have volunteers sign in using a time clock. This is also acceptable.
- 3) For the volunteer, the time sheet is vital to ensuring receipt of the program benefits of supplemental insurance and if applicable, to reimburse Bestway Cab.

Requirements for Volunteer Stations:

- 1) Timesheets must include the following: Volunteer Station Name, Volunteer Supervisor Signature; Volunteer Signature; Month and Year.
- 2) Timesheets are turned into RSVP by the volunteer station supervisor by the 5th day following the month service is provided.
- 3) If timesheets are e-mailed a copy of the e-mail is attached to the timesheet for a signature; **timesheets submitted by fax or mail must be signed by the volunteer station supervisor.**
- 4) RSVP will provide timesheets to the volunteer station, either electronic or hard copy.

- **Meal Reimbursement Policy**

Due to limited resources, City of Miles City RSVP does not reimburse for meals associated with volunteer assignments. Volunteer stations that provide meals to volunteers are required to submit an In Kind voucher, provided by the RSVP office, monthly.

- **Travel Reimbursement Policy**

- 1) 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 Bestway Cab to request transportation, following approval by the RSVP office. Bestway Cab will bill RSVP.
- 2) 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. If the dates do not match RSVP is NOT responsible for payment to Bestway Cab.

- 3) Special Assignment Reimbursement: Travel and meals reimbursement, by volunteers for special projects and or assignments developed by the City of Miles City RSVP will be reimbursed at the rate used by the City. Meals will be reimbursed at the rate of \$5/Breakfast, \$6/Lunch, and \$12/Dinner. RSVP Volunteers and Volunteer Station Staff/RSVP Staff are required to sign a statement certifying that transportation costs to be reimbursed to the volunteer were in conjunction with volunteer service and to provide details of the reimbursement. Volunteers will use the City of Miles City RSVP Timesheet and Mileage Reimbursement Request form.

VOLUNTEER BENEFITS, RECOGNITION, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

- **Insurance**

Supplemental Accident, Personal Liability and Automobile Liability insurance cover RSVP volunteers while volunteering or traveling to or from their volunteer assignments, provided they have personal liability insurance and their driver's license is valid and the number is on file at the RSVP Office. 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 volunteer station representative will be expected to maintain appropriate notes and records.

- **Recognition**

RSVP holds recognition events throughout the year. The events may vary from year to year. Usually, special attention is applied during National Volunteer Recognition Week (April) and to Senior Corps Week (May.) The volunteer station supervisors are invited to attend these events. Volunteer stations may be asked to provide door prizes, or other support to the recognition events. Although this is not mandatory it is appreciated.

- **Newsletter**

There is a quarterly newsletter published by RSVP mailed to all volunteers and volunteer stations. It contains articles with information, education, and entertainment for RSVP members.

- **Website/Facebook**

Pictures of events, both recognition and volunteer events, are posted on the RSVP website: www.rsvpmilescity.org Pictures will also be posted on City of Miles City RSVP Facebook page.

- **Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities**

Volunteers have the right to:

- 1) Assignments that suit them
- 2) Clear and specific instruction about their assignments
- 3) Continuing staff support from RSVP
- 4) Treatment as an equal co-worker
- 5) The opportunity to offer their ideas and suggestions

- 6) 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:

- 1) Make a serious commitment to the assignment
- 2) Be loyal to the organization, cooperate with the staff and abide by all rules and policies
- 3) 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.

- **Disqualifications of Registered Sex Offenders and Convicted Murders**

An individual who has been convicted of murder and/or is registered, or who is required to be registered, on a state sex offender registry is deemed unsuitable for, and may not serve as a volunteer. Volunteers are screened at the local level.

- **Prohibited Activities**

- 1) Neither RSVP nor any volunteer station can request or receive compensation from the beneficiaries of Senior Corps volunteers.
- 2) Volunteer Station financial support of RSVP is not a precondition for that station to obtain volunteer service.
- 3) RSVP volunteers will not receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardian, or members of their family, or friends.
- 4) RSVP grant funds are not to be used to finance labor or anti-labor organizations or related activity.
- 5) No part of the RSVP grant may be used to finance, directly or indirectly, any activity to influence the outcome of any election to public office, or any voter registration activity.
- 6) RSVP volunteers may not give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any form of proselytization as part of their duties.
- 7) 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 would supplant the hiring of or result in the displacement of employed workers, or impair existing contracts for service.

- **Volunteer Separation Procedure**

- 1) In order to remain an active RSVP volunteer the volunteer MUST serve at least 6 hours each year (July 1-June 30) If you have not volunteered at a RSVP approved volunteer station and hours been turned into the RSVP office between July 1-June 30 your name will be moved to the Inactive Volunteer List. Volunteers may be re-activated upon returning to volunteer service.
- 2) 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.

- 3) By policy, RSVP Volunteer stations 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 Director 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 Director as soon as possible.
 - 4) Volunteers leaving a volunteer station are also asked to report that information to the RSVP Director as soon as possible.
- **Appeal Procedure**
 - 1) 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.
 - 2) 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.
 - 3) 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.

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 participation in RSVP from 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 (RSVP) 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.”** The other two are Senior Companion Program and Foster Grandparent Program.

VOLUNTEER STATION CASH OR IN-KIND SUPPORT OF RSVP VOLUNTEERS

In accordance with 45 CFR 2553.91(c) a RSVP volunteer station may contribute to the financial support of the RSVP project. However, this support is not to be a required precondition for a volunteer station to obtain RSVP volunteers. If a volunteer station 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 volunteer station.

However, if a Volunteer Station has indicated on the Memorandum of Understanding it will provide monetary or in-kind support to RSVP and 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 RSVP may terminate the MOU. RSVP is required to match federal funding 30%; withdrawal of in-kind support, without prior notice, could jeopardize the ability to do so; thus putting the RSVP funding in jeopardy.

PROGRAMMING FOR PERFORMANCE MEASURES

In alignment with the Corporation for National and Community Service Strategic Plan, RSVP’s may choose from the following six Focus Areas: Healthy Futures, Veterans and Military Families, Environmental Stewardship, Education, Economic Opportunity, and Disaster Services. Emphasis is put on measuring the impact of service and focusing on a core set of issues area.

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 Director.