



# RSVP

Northern Virginia

VOLUNTEERS 55+ IMPACTING  
THEIR COMMUNITIES

# **AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer Handbook**



**Dear AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer,**

Welcome to RSVP-Northern Virginia!

Thank you for joining one of our nation's largest volunteer networks for people aged 55 and over. Established in 1971, RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer program) has a rich history of empowering volunteers to respond to critical community needs across the country.

In Northern Virginia, RSVP volunteers increase the capacity of public and non-profit agencies in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County, and the City of Alexandria. RSVP taps into the skills, experience, and interests of Northern Virginians aged 55 and over who live in the region.

We hope to guide each and every AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer to a comfortable and meaningful experience geared at service. We look forward to you sharing your time, skills, and talents with our community.

This Volunteer Handbook provides an overview of our program, as well as the policies and procedures that ensure a positive and meaningful experience for the volunteers and nonprofit partners (called *Volunteer Stations* by RSVP). Please read through this material and feel free to contact RSVP staff or your volunteer workstation if you have any questions.

RSVP is excited to be a gateway for service to your community, as well as part of your journey as you grow in your own individual interests, talents, and relationships. We also offer social and recognition opportunities that build connections among the community of volunteers and workstations who are serve our region.

RSVP-Northern Virginia extends to you our personal best wishes for your success and happiness as a volunteer. We look forward to working with you!

Many thanks,

*Stacey Iden*

Program Manager, RSVP-Northern Virginia



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## Overview

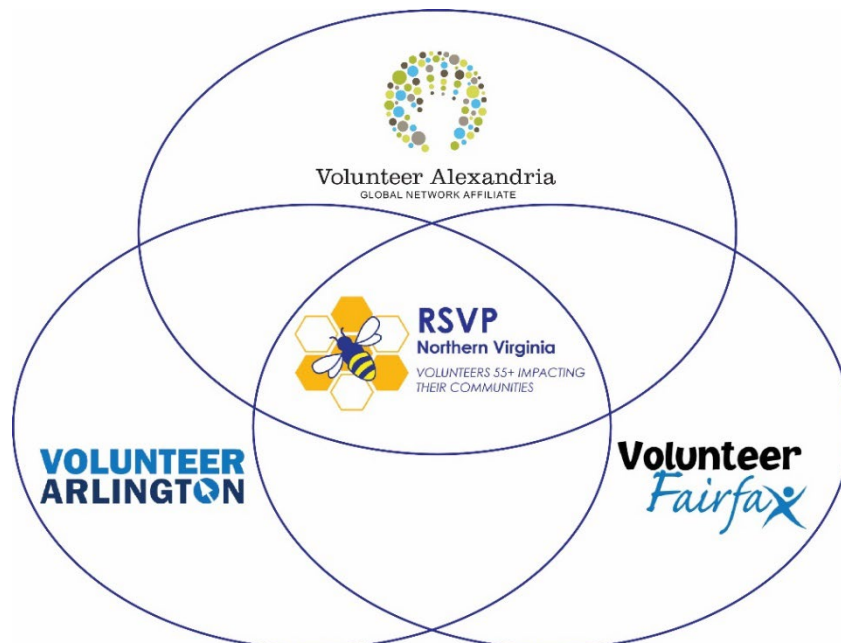
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### **History of RSVP**

RSVP is a program of AmeriCorps Seniors through AmeriCorps, a federal agency that supports the American culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility through national service initiatives. Originally created by The Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973, RSVP was developed as a nationwide effort to engage older adults in community service. Today, RSVP is one of America's largest volunteer networks for people aged 55 and older, with more than 300,000 members serving across the country.

### **RSVP in Our Community**

The RSVP program in Northern Virginia was launched in 2013 through a partnership of three local volunteer centers: Volunteer Fairfax, Volunteer Alexandria, and Volunteer Arlington. This regional program links individuals to volunteer opportunities, while also strengthening the capacity of area nonprofits and agencies to make a long-term impact on the community.





## **Member Benefits**

Studies show that volunteering helps people live longer, more meaningful lives. In addition to meeting friends who share the same passion for service, benefits to AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serving with RSVP-Northern Virginia include:

- Flexibility and variety in service activities
- Personalized matching with meaningful opportunities at local/national non-profits and agencies
- Free excess accident medical coverage, volunteer liability, and automobile liability insurance
- Optional mileage and meal reimbursement
- Group service activities, including social and recognition events
- Leadership opportunities at outreach events as one of our Volunteer Leaders or RSVP Advisory Council member
- Access to new volunteer opportunities, news, and event delivered to you through an exclusive e-newsletter
- A chance to share your 55+ years of skills and experience and explore new talents!


## **Opportunities to Make an Impact**

RSVP partners with organizations, referred to as “Volunteer Stations”, that meet identified community needs. We work with agencies and volunteers to measure and demonstrate the positive impact on the community. Volunteers serve in a variety of ways to impact specific Focus Areas. These are the Focus Areas for the RSVP-NV Grant 2021-2024:

- **Food Delivery:** Addresses needs of individuals who are mobility-challenged and are unable to purchase or prepare their own meals.
- **Food Collection, Food Distribution, and Food Pantry Support:** Addresses unmet needs of economically disadvantaged individuals with food insecurities.






- **Education:** Addresses topics related to unmet educational needs within communities utilizing in-person or virtual tutoring, specifically focused on K-12 youth.
- **Financial Literacy:** Address the lack of financial literacy for children and adults in our communities with regard to credit management, utilization of savings plans, and financial institutions including banks and credit unions.
- **Companionship:** Addresses unmet health needs, including access to health care, increasing physical activity and nutritional awareness, leading to an increase of seniors' ability to remain in their own homes.
- **Transportation:** Addresses unmet needs for transportation services to help homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities live independently.



## AmeriCorps Seniors Pledge

I will get things done for America – to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier.  
When faced with a pressing challenge, I will bring Americans of all generations together to strengthen our communities.  
When faced with children at risk, I will help them stay in school and on track for a brighter future.  
When faced with older adults in need, I will provide support and compassion so they may age with grace and dignity.  
Working for the greatest good, I will use my lifetime of experiences to improve my country, my community, and myself through service.  
I am an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer and I will get things done.





# Volunteer Policies

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## **Eligibility**

To be an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer serving with RSVP-Northern Virginia, an individual must:

- 1) Be 55 years of age or older. (You will be asked to verify upon enrollment.)
- 2) Agree to serve without compensation.
- 3) Reside in or near Fairfax County, Arlington County, or the City of Alexandria.
- 4) Agree to abide by all requirements as identified in this handbook.

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are not employees of RSVP-Northern Virginia (Volunteer Fairfax, Volunteer Arlington, & Volunteer Alexandria), the Volunteer Station, AmeriCorps Seniors, or the Federal Government.

## **Equal Volunteering Opportunity**

RSVP-Northern Virginia provides equal volunteering opportunity for everyone aged 55 and over, regardless of sex, color, race, creed, national origin, religion, marital status, political belief, sexual orientation, or disability that does not prohibit performance of essential job functions. All matters relating to volunteering are based upon the ability to perform the job, as well as dependability and reliability once appointed.

## **Harassment**

RSVP-Northern Virginia intends to provide a volunteer environment that is pleasant, healthful, comfortable, and free from intimidation, hostility, or other offenses which might interfere with volunteer performance. Harassment may include words, signs, jokes, pranks, intimidation, physical contact, or violence. Harassment of any sort-verbal, physical, visual-will not be tolerated.

## **Background Checks**

RSVP-Northern Virginia is not responsible for providing volunteer background checks. A volunteer who works with vulnerable populations-those under 18 years of age, those over 60 years of age, and those who are disabled-may be required to have a criminal background check and be fingerprinted. Volunteers will comply with Volunteer Stations to conduct any necessary background checks, in accordance with Volunteer Station policies.



## **Confidential Information**

RSVP-Northern Virginia values the trust its volunteers place in the organization and adheres to the highest privacy standards in gathering, using, and safeguarding volunteer information such as date of birth, drivers license number and insurance information, email address, etc. RSVP-Northern Virginia will not rent, trade, sell, or share any information about our volunteers.

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they have access while serving as an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer. Your volunteer service with RSVP assumes an obligation to maintain confidentiality. As a volunteer, you may be privy to information that is confidential in nature and cannot be shared with anyone, including family, friends, or acquaintances. Volunteers may be asked by their Volunteer Station to sign a confidentiality agreement. Compliance with that agreement may be a condition of volunteering at that station.

## **Membership Status**

RSVP-Northern Virginia asks volunteers to serve at least once per calendar year (or as frequently as his or her volunteer assignment requires). If it is necessary for you to take a break from your service activity, it is very important that you contact your workstation supervisor and the RSVP-Volunteer Specialist. You may request the status of "inactive RSVP member" if special circumstances or life events impact your ability to serve (such as illness, taking care of a loved one, traveling, or temporarily residing out of the area). As circumstances change again, we can re-activate your volunteer service. If circumstances warrant your withdrawal from RSVP, please let us know the date you intend to resign, which will be your official ending date. Membership will also be put into an *inactive status* if you are inactive for 365 consecutive days. You may re-activate your membership at any time.

## **Absences and Tardiness**

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are expected to be reliable, dependable, and on time while performing their volunteer duties. If you are unable to report, or if you will arrive late, please contact your Volunteer Station supervisor as soon as possible. Giving the supervisor as much advance notice as possible will allow them to arrange for someone to cover your position.





## ***Disciplinary Action***

Unacceptable behavior may lead to immediate dismissal without warning. However, depending on the nature of the behavior, it may also be addressed by a verbal warning, followed by disciplinary suspension, and ending in a dismissal. Warnings entail discussion of the objectionable behavior and consequences of this behavior. You will have the opportunity to explain your actions at the time the warning is issued.

## ***RSVP Membership Dismissal***

A volunteer may be dismissed for the following reasons:

- Misconduct or inappropriate behavior
- Unsatisfactory performance
- Breach of confidentiality
- Willful violation of security or safety rules, failure to observe safety rules, or failure to wear required safety equipment
- Being intoxicated or under the influence of controlled substances while volunteering
- Unauthorized possession of dangerous or illegal firearms;
- Theft of property
- Threatening, intimidating, or coercing fellow volunteers, the public, staff, or workstation staff
- Dishonesty, willful falsification, or misrepresentation on your volunteer application or other volunteer records

## ***Prohibited Volunteer Activities***

Because RSVP-Northern Virginia is a federally funded program, our policy states that members are prohibited from engaging in the following activities while volunteering:

- **Political Activities:** AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers must not participate in activity that will influence the outcome of any election to political office while they are volunteering with RSVP-Northern Virginia.
- **Religious Activities:** AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers must not participate in any religious or secretarian activity while they are volunteering. This includes giving religious instruction, conducting worship services, or engaging in any form of proselytizing at Volunteer Stations.



- Displacement of Employees: AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers must 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 workers.
- AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers cannot receive a fee for services from service recipients, their legal guardians, family members, or friends.



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## Volunteer Insurance: Summary of Coverage

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It does not happen often, but when it does, the results can be serious... a volunteer is injured, or injures someone else, while performing his or her volunteer duties. One of the benefits of volunteering with RSVP is that you are provided with insurance protection in case such a thing happens to you.

**AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers must provide their insurance carrier, driver's license number, and expiration date on the Volunteer Information Form in order to be covered under this insurance. When filing a claim, the volunteer must also submit a monthly timesheet showing the volunteer activity he or she was performing when the injury occurred.**

**If you need to file a claim or want more information about insurance coverage, contact the RSVP Staff.**

### **CIMA Volunteer Insurance**

2650 Killarney Dr., Suite 202  
Woodbridge, VA 22192

(p)703.739.9300

(f)703.739.0761

volunteers@cimaworld.com

[www.cimaworld.com](http://www.cimaworld.com)



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# Volunteer Timesheet & Reimbursement Form

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## Reporting Hours

Monthly timesheets are an important part of measuring the value of your impact.

As a federally funded program, we are required to maintain records of the hours and types of service provided by AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers. Your timesheet also helps us to make sure you receive recognition for your hours of service.

Volunteer timesheets are due to the RSVP Volunteer Specialist **by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month**. You may keep track of your hours at home, or your supervisor may provide a safe place for you to keep your timesheet on-site. You can email, mail, or even take a picture on your phone to send in your monthly timesheet. Send it to [rsvp@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:rsvp@volunteerfairfax.org).

**Timesheets are due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month:**

**Email:**

[rsvp@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:rsvp@volunteerfairfax.org)

**Mail:**

RSVP-Northern VA  
c/o Volunteer Fairfax  
10700 Page Ave. , Suite 101  
Fairfax, VA, 22030

**Phone:** 703-403-5360

## Requesting Reimbursement

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are eligible to request the following reimbursements:

### Mileage:

- Only for your trips in your personal vehicle, going to/from your volunteer assignment.
- Reimbursed at a rate of 40 cents per mile up to 100 miles per month, **for a maximum of \$40 per month**.
- **Mileage driven for the volunteer agency is not eligible for RSVP reimbursement.**



- RSVP staff will reach out to your Volunteer Station supervisor to ensure the mileage requested is approved by confirming the miles and a map of the route from your service to your home. The map allows for up to a 5-mile discrepancy as an allowance for volunteers that do not take the same route every day.
- **If you wish to receive mileage reimbursement, RSVP must have your current driver's license and auto insurance information on file.**

**Meals:**

- When volunteering during breakfast, lunch, or dinner, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers can request reimbursement for a **maximum of \$6.00 per meal. Volunteers must submit a receipt with their reimbursement form.**

Reimbursement requests are to be submitted with the monthly timesheet. If you wish to receive reimbursement, your volunteer supervisor must sign the timesheet AND the volunteer must sign the timesheet. Please allow 6 weeks for your reimbursement checks to arrive.

*\*Note: RSVP-Northern Virginia does not report your mileage to the Internal Revenue Service. Volunteer cost reimbursements are not subject to any tax or charge and are not treated as wages or compensation for purposes of unemployment insurance, worker's compensation, temporary disability, retirement, public assistance, or similar benefit payments of minimum wage laws.*



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Service Month: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**RSVP-NOVA Timesheet  
 & Reimbursement Form**

ALL VOLUNTEERS: Please submit the following information by the 5 <sup>th</sup> of each month.				Mileage/Meal Reimbursement		For Office Use Only:
Date of Service (MM/DD)	Name of Volunteer Station	Brief Description of Service Activity	# of Hours	Miles Driven <small>(to/from assignment only; \$40/mile up to 100 miles)</small>	Cost of Meals <small>(up to \$6/meal; include receipts)</small>	
						Hours/mileage confirmation requested:
						Confirmation received:
						Check Info:
						Entered in Volgistics:
<b>Totals</b>						

Would you like mileage/meal reimbursement?      Yes      No

My signature attests that the information recorded above is true and accurate; *supervisor signature is only required for mileage/meal reimbursement.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
 RSVP Volunteer Signature    Date      Station Supervisor Signature    Date      RSVP Staff Signature    Date

Please email, fax, or mail this form by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month: RSVP Volunteer Specialist: [kcoon@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:kcoon@volunteerfairfax.org)  
 12015 Lee Jackson Memorial Hwy, Suite 225 | Fairfax, VA 22030 | (p) 703.403.5360 | (f) 703.246.4662



## Volunteer Station Policies

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A Volunteer Station is an organization that meets critical community needs and accepts the responsibility for assignment and supervision of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in health, education, social service, or related settings. RSVP-Northern Virginia matches volunteers with Volunteer Stations that serve in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County, and the City of Alexandria. Each Volunteer Station must:

- (a) Develop volunteer assignments that impact critical human and social needs, and regularly assess those assignments for continued appropriateness;
- (b) Assign a staff member responsible for day to day oversight of the placement of RSVP volunteers within the workstation and for assessing the impact of the volunteers in addressing the community needs;
- (c) Keep records and prepare reports as required;
- (d) Obtain a Letter of Agreement for any in-home volunteer assignments (ex. Friendly Visitors). The Letter of Agreement shall comply with all federal, state, and local regulations;
- (e) Comply with all applicable civil rights laws and regulations including reasonable accommodation for AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers with disabilities;
- (f) Provide assigned AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers with support, including:
  - Orientation to station and appropriate in-service training to enhance performance of assignments;
  - Resources required for performance of assignments including reasonable accommodation;
  - Supervision while on assignment;
  - Appropriate recognition; and
  - Provide for the safety of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers assigned to it; and,
- (g) Undertake such 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, which includes a safety checklist to be completed yearly by either Volunteer Station staff or the RSVP Program Manager.



## Getting Started

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Ready to join RSVP and serve as an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer? Here is how to get started:

- 1) **Attend a one-time, one-hour RSVP Orientation** to learn about current volunteer opportunities, RSVP member benefits, and volunteer policies.
- 2) **Complete the Volunteer Application Form**, which will help us find opportunities that meet your skills, interests, and availability.
- 3) **Attend a one-on-one phone meeting with our Volunteer Specialist** to explore current volunteer opportunities. (Please allow up to one week after you have submitted your Volunteer Application Form for this meeting to be scheduled.) At your meeting, you will receive more details about the positions and point-of-contact for each Volunteer Station of interest to you.
- 4) **The Volunteer Specialist will put you in contact with the Volunteer Station(s) that you have decided are the best fit for you.** The Volunteer Station may invite you to an orientation or interview to determine if this opportunity is a mutually good fit. This is where RSVP will hand you off to the Volunteer Station, but know WE ARE ALWAYS HERE FOR YOU. If you decide the volunteer opportunities are not a good fit, or you want to be involved with additional opportunities, please contact us at any time.





## FAQ'S

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### ***How do I change or add a volunteer assignment?***

Want a change of scenery or an opportunity learn new skills? We are happy to work with you to explore new volunteer assignments at any time. Please contact the RSVP Volunteer Specialist for assistance in finding another or additional opportunities. (Remember that there is no limit on the number of volunteer hours or assignments you take on!)

### ***I have a friend who is interested in joining RSVP. Who should they contact?***

It's no surprise that good people are connected with other good people! We encourage you to help us get the word out about the program and invite others to participate. If you know someone who would like to join RSVP, please have him or her contact the RSVP Volunteer Specialist.

### ***Something just came up and I can't attend my service activity. What do I do?***

If you're unable to attend your volunteer assignment, please let your Volunteer Station supervisor know as soon as possible. Individuals and organizations are counting on you, so please make sure you are aware of the cancellation policies for each organization where you serve.

### ***How often do I need to volunteer to remain an active RSVP member?***

We ask that RSVP members volunteer at at least once per calendar year (or as frequently as his or her volunteer assignment requires). We try our best to place volunteers in assignments that are a good fit with individual schedules, so please let us know if your availability changes. Membership will be put into *inactive status* if you are inactive for 365 consecutive days. That means, if you have not turned in an RSVP timesheet (with your volunteer hours) within a that 365 days, we will move your membership to *inactive*. You can re-activate your membership at any time by turning in a month RSVP timesheet or emailing the Volunteer Specialist.



### ***How can I meet other RSVP members?***

In addition to your volunteer assignment(s), RSVP offers social and group service events for volunteers throughout the year. Upcoming events will be posted on our website and in our regular RSVP communications. We also encourage you to get to know your fellow volunteers throughout your time of service.

### ***I am volunteering with another organization; can I receive RSVP benefits for this other activity?***

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers may only receive member benefits, such as insurance coverage and reimbursement, while serving with designated Volunteer Stations (Volunteer Stations RSVP connects you with). We are always looking to expand our partnerships, so please let us know if you would like to recommend a new organization that might benefit from RSVP volunteers.

### ***What do I do if I feel that my workstation is not following RSVP policies?***

It is very important to us that you have a positive and meaningful volunteer experience. RSVP Volunteer Stations have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to agree to all program policies. If you feel that a station is violating any part of this agreement, please contact RSVP staff.



## Contact Us

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Email: [RSVP@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:RSVP@volunteerfairfax.org)

Phone: 703-403-5360



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# Volunteer Fairfax

www.volunteerfairfax.org  
12015 Lee Jackson Memorial Hwy  
Suite 225  
Fairfax VA 22033  
703-246-3460

## VOLUNTEER ARLINGTON

<http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/HumanServices/volunteer/HumanServicesVolunteerVolunteerOffice.aspx>

2100 Washington Blvd 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Arlington, VA 22204  
703-228-1760



Volunteer Alexandria  
HANDS ON NETWORK

<http://volunteeralexandria.org/>  
123 N. Alfred Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
703-836-2176