The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program
Of the Midlands

Volunteer Handbook

January 2015
Welcome RSVP Volunteer!

The Retired Senior & Volunteer Program (RSVP) of the Midlands welcomes you as a volunteer! Our volunteers represent a wealth of talents and expertise serving Richland, Lexington and Newberry Counties. RSVP volunteers are everyday heroes willing to use their special interests and skills to meet community needs.

Please take the time to read this handbook and do not hesitate to share any concerns with us. We hope you will be impressed and impacted by the service you bring to your organization. Thank you for leading with experience and for making a difference in your community.

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This handbook is written for volunteers to provide important information regarding the RSVP program, volunteers and volunteer stations.
1.0 The RSVP Program

The Retired Senior & Volunteer Program (RSVP) of the Midlands is funded by the Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS) and is sponsored locally by Senior Resources, Inc. RSVP grants serve the dual purpose of: engaging 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.

As defined by the CNCS grant, RSVP programs must place at least 25% of their unduplicated volunteers in one of these six priority focus areas, which include: Education, Healthy Futures (such Food Delivery, Distribution, Collection), Economic Opportunity, Veterans & Military Families, Environmental Stewardship and Disaster Services. Volunteers may also be placed in other community priority service activities.

RSVP is one of the largest volunteer efforts in the nation. Since 1971, RSVP projects have linked the skills of older adults with identified community needs to create a positive change. The volunteers determine where they want to work and how many hours a week they want to serve. RSVP volunteers do not receive any monetary incentive or stipend, but the RSVP project may reimburse them for certain out-of-pocket costs associated with their service activities. In addition, all RSVP volunteers receive accident, personal and automobile liability insurance while on duty, along with community recognition for their service.

Each year nearly 300,000 adults, age 55 and older, provide community service to locally sponsored RSVP project sites. The amount of service can vary from a few hours a month to almost full-time. RSVP volunteers assist in classrooms, tutor children and teenagers, pack food co-op bags, deliver Meals on Wheels, teach computer skills, work at shelters, serve veterans and assist victims of natural disasters — and do whatever else their skills and interests lead them to do to meet the needs of their community.

1.1 Who Can Join RSVP

Anyone who is at least 55 years of age and older and has a desire to serve their community. There are no formal education, income or experience requirements. There are no dues or membership fees.
By regulation, eligibility to serve as a RSVP volunteer shall not be restricted on the basis of formal education, experience, race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, handicap or political affiliation.

1.2 What RSVP Offers to You

1. Helps you get placed with the volunteer station(s) of your choice.
2. Support and guidance from your station coordinator.
3. Three types of free supplemental insurance while you volunteer.
4. Annual recognition event.
5. Social interaction and a chance to meet new people.
6. Quarterly newsletter.
7. Flexibility in volunteering when and where you want.
8. A chance to make a difference in your community.

2.0 Volunteer Station Information
RSVP volunteers are recruited and enrolled by the RSVP program and placed throughout participating agencies and organizations. Volunteer stations are encouraged to support recruitment by referring eligible volunteers to the program.

2.1 Characteristics of Volunteer Stations
- A volunteer station can be a public agency, secular or faith-based, private or non-profit organization, or a proprietary health care organization that accepts the responsibility for assignment and supervision of RSVP volunteers. Each volunteer station must be licensed or otherwise certified, when required, by the appropriate state or local government. Informal groups do not qualify as volunteer stations.

- Placements must not displace paid employees and must avoid other staff or clerical assignments which would accrue to the profitability of the proprietary health-care organization.

- The Memorandum of Understanding with such volunteer stations must include detailed provisions to ensure compliance with program regulations regarding “Nondisplacement of Employed Workers and Nonimpairment of Contracts for Service”

- Individual private homes may not be volunteer stations. In-home assignments are made only through a volunteer station.
• Volunteer stations are located within the project's service area as defined in the approved grant application. CNCS places great emphasis on volunteer assignments that result in a positive impact upon the community served.

2.2 Types of Volunteer Stations

RSVP volunteers may serve in many different types of volunteer stations, such as:

- Meals on Wheels Packing Sites and Meal Delivery
- Food Banks/Food Co-ops
- School Programs/Libraries
- Community Development Non-Profits/Congregate Meal Centers
- Museums/Thrift Stores
- Parks & Recreation Organizations/Public Housing
- Senior Wellness Centers/Senior & Disabled Transportation Shelters (homeless, abused women, etc.)
- Environmental Programs/Secondary Schools/Elementary Schools
- Veterans Hospitals/Free Medical Clinics

2.3 Special Projects and Events

At times throughout the year, we ask for help with special projects or events, such as the Salvation Army Christmas Warehouse Bear Program, the Pillow Case Dresses for Africa or the MLK Day of Service. Volunteers will be recruited via telephone call, the monthly update or the quarterly newsletter. Time sheets will be distributed specifically for each special project or event.

2.4 Roles and Responsibilities of Volunteer Stations

1) Develop volunteer assignments that impact critical human and social needs, and regularly assess those assignments for continued appropriateness.
2) Assign staff member responsible for day to day oversight of the placement of RSVP volunteers within the volunteer station and for assessing the impact of volunteers in addressing community needs.
4) Keep records and prepare reports as required.
5) Comply with all applicable civil rights laws and regulations including reasonable accommodation for RSVP volunteers with disabilities.
6) Provide assigned RSVP volunteers the following support:
   a. Orientation to station and appropriate in-service training to enhance performance of assignments.
b. Resources required for performance of assignments including reasonable accommodation.
c. Supervision while on assignment.
d. Appropriate recognition.

7) Provide for the safety of RSVP volunteers assigned to it.

### 2.5 Additional Responsibilities

The program regulations also provide that volunteer stations 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. Such other responsibilities typically include:

1) Assisting with or helping to arrange for volunteer transportation, volunteer recognition, and, when possible, meals. Project funds may be used to reimburse volunteers for expenses, including transportation costs, incurred while performing their volunteer assignments, provided that these expenses are described in the Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station and there are sufficient funds available to cover these expenses and meet all other requirements identified in the Notice of Grant Award. Otherwise, such expenses are the responsibility of the volunteer station.

2) Maintaining volunteer service records.

3) Assisting projects with development of written assignment descriptions in accordance with Programming for Impact and performance measurement principles and practices.

4) Providing the project with updates and accomplishments related to the written volunteer assignment descriptions and to document and report project accomplishments and impacts.

5) Appraising volunteer performance, according to the station’s practice.

6) Providing testimonials and examples of how RSVP volunteers meet important community needs, as well as the impact on the capabilities of the volunteer station and its staff to carry out the station’s mission and/or achieve its goals, objectives, responsibilities to clients, etc.

7) Prior to placement of volunteers, signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the sponsor establishing working relationships and mutual responsibilities and detailing the responsibilities outlined above as well as other responsibilities that may be agreed to. The Memorandum of Understanding may be amended at any time by mutual agreement.

### 3.0 Volunteer Information

#### 3.1 Reporting Volunteer Hours
We are required to keep accurate records of the hours RSVP volunteers work. Hours are reported to CNCS, our funding source.

Volunteer hours are important to RSVP surrounding communities. Documentation of the volunteer hours given helps us provide a picture of the important contributions people 55 and older are making through their experience and their time. This enables us to provide information to others about the types of volunteer work and number of hours of service. Tracking your time helps RSVP promote seniors as active, contributing members of their community.

The volunteer station will record volunteer hours on timesheets. Hours are then forwarded to RSVP, preferably on a monthly basis either by the individual or the station staff. We do ask that station supervisors sign timesheets.

**By the 10th of each month,** the previous month’s timesheets should be completed, signed and returned to the RSVP office:

**By mail:** Senior Resources Inc.  
RSVP of the Midlands  
2817 Millwood Avenue  
Columbia, SC 29205-1261

**By fax:** 803-929-0349

**By e-mail:** rsvpcoordinator@seniorresourcesinc.org

We have not had funding available for mileage reimbursement, but if it becomes available, the RSVP Director must approve any mileage reimbursement requests that are available through the current RSVP budget.

The station supervisor’s signature and the volunteer’s signature must be on each timesheet, submitted with a reimbursement request (and is included on specific timesheets where reimbursement has been authorized).

### 3.2 Volunteer Insurance

Each volunteer enrolled in the RSVP program is eligible for three kinds of insurance when volunteering at volunteer station:

1) Accident insurance
2) Personal liability insurance
3) Secondary automobile liability insurance
The policies provide coverage for individuals while participating in community service as a volunteer with an RSVP volunteer station.

This insurance is secondary to any insurance the volunteer may already carry and does not duplicate expenses paid by Medicare or any other valid and collectible insurance coverage.

The administrator of the insurance is Corporate Insurance Management Associates (CIMA). Brochures explaining benefits and coverage provided by CIMA available from the RSVP Office.

If a RSVP volunteer is involved in an accident while volunteering at your site, please notify the RSVP Director at (803) 252-7734 extension 246 immediately so claim forms can be forwarded to you and/or the volunteer for completion in reporting of the accident.

3.3 How to be a Successful Volunteer

1. Accept appropriate assignments.
2. Respect confidentially.
3. Be dependable and on time for all assignments or notify the proper person so alternative arrangements can be made.
4. Be a good listener.
5. Have a positive attitude.
6. Maintain a professional appearance within the dress code of the volunteer station.
7. Ask questions to ensure that you understand your duties.
8. Follow the smoking and eating regulations of the station.
9. Provide helpful feedback and suggestions to your supervisor.
10. Be responsible for reporting your volunteer hours on a monthly basis.
11. Report any concerns you may have to the RSVP staff or station supervisory staff.
12. Remember you are a valued member of the team.

3.4 Bill of Rights for Volunteers

1. The Right to be treated as a co-worker, not just as free help.
2. The Right to a suitable assignment with consideration for personal preference, temperament, life experience, education and employment background.
3. The Right to training for the job, thoughtfully planned and effectively presented.
4. The Right to know as much about the agency as possible, its policies, its people and the programs.
5. The Right to continuing education on the job as a follow-up to the initial training, information about new developments, training for greater responsibility if appropriate.
6. The Right to sound guidance and direction by someone who is experienced well informed, patient and thoughtful with the time to invest in giving guidance.
7. The Right to a place to work in an orderly fashion.
8. The Right to promotion and variety of experiences, through advancement to assignments of more responsibility, through transfer from one activity to another, through special project assignments if applicable.
9. The Right to be heard, to have a part in planning, to feel free to make suggestions, to have respect shown for an honest opinion.
10. The Right to recognition and appreciation, in the form of promotion and awards.

3.5 **Volunteer Termination**

The following list includes, but is not limited to, circumstances that may result in a volunteer being removed from the program:

1. Extensive and unauthorized absences
2. Misconduct
3. Inability to perform assignments
4. Failure to accept supervision
5. Breach of confidentiality
6. Repeatedly not following the rules/regulations of the volunteer station

3.6 **Volunteer Termination Appeal Procedure**

Occasionally a volunteer may have a problem with their volunteer placement. In the event this occurs, the volunteer should first approach his/her volunteer supervisor to discuss the problem. Reaching no solution to the problem, the volunteer should contact the RSVP Director to help make other volunteer arrangements.

4.0 **Staff and Office Information**

**RSVP of the Midlands Staff:**

Beaverly Brandt

**Office Address:**

Senior Resources, Inc.
Thank you for your service!