NAU RSVP VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

January 2017

NAU RSVP Volunteer Handbook for Apache, Cochise, Coconino, Mohave, Navajo and Santa Cruz Counties
Dear RSVP Volunteer,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the RSVP program. Your volunteer service is an important contribution to your community, and I thank you for choosing to partner with RSVP.

In this RSVP Volunteer Handbook you will find information about the RSVP Program, the benefits it offers you, what is expected of you, and numerous other topics that will help you to have an enjoyable experience as an RSVP Volunteer.

If at any time, you desire a change in assignment or additional volunteer work, we will be happy to assist you. Our goal is to make sure you’re happy with your volunteer service.

Erin Kruse

Senior Corps Programs Project Director

NAU RSVP Program
P.O. Box 5063
Flagstaff, AZ 86011
Phone: 928-523-6585 Fax: 928-523-9189
Toll free 866-856-3017
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WHAT IS RSVP?

The RSVP Program is part of Senior Corps funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the federal agency for volunteer service. It has 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.

The NAU RSVP program is administered by a Senior Corps (SC) Director under the auspices of the Civic Service Institute (CSI) at the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences of Northern Arizona University (NAU) and serves an 11 county area.

History:

Congressional interest in establishing a program to address the needs of senior and retired persons began in 1965. In 1969, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program was created as an amendment to the Older Americans Act with eleven Retired and Senior Volunteer Projects receiving funding in 1971.

Since that time, RSVP has expanded throughout the United States. There are now well over one-half million RSVP volunteers in cities all around the country giving more than six million hours of time in service to their communities. Authorized and funded by Congress, the program is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service which monitors and advises local projects.

NAU has been the sponsor of RSVP in Northern Arizona since 1992 and over the years it has grown to include the western Arizona counties of La Paz, Mohave, and Yuma. In 2013, we were awarded a new grant for Southeastern Arizona to cover Cochise, Graham, Greenlee, and Santa Cruz Counties.

Focus:

CNCS has developed 7 focus areas and directed its grantees to dedicate the majority of their time and energy in one or more of these areas which are:

- Capacity Building
- Disaster Preparedness
- Economic Opportunities
- Environmental Stewardship
- Education
- Healthy Futures
- Veterans and Military Families

NAU’s RSVP Program has adopted Capacity Building, Education, Healthy Futures, and Veterans and Military Families as our four focus areas. Each local community has some priorities that fall outside of these four areas however the majority of our time and
energy is spent developing relationships with partner agencies in these areas and addressing the most pressing needs through volunteer engagement. Some examples of the volunteer opportunities in these focus areas are:

- **Capacity Building**: RSVP volunteers will train in effective volunteer management practices and will consult with partner agencies on a project basis to assist the agency in recruiting more volunteers.

- **Education**: RSVP volunteers will serve as tutors in K-12 settings to assist students to meet education goals and improve academic engagement; they will also serve in Head Start classrooms working with preschool age children on basic motor skills.

- **Healthy Futures**: Volunteers will deliver home-delivered meals such as Meals on Wheels, assist food banks with providing emergency food to people in need, provide companionship services (including transportation) to homebound individuals, and establish and maintain school and community gardens.

- **Veterans and Military Families**: Volunteers will serve with organizations focused on providing support to veterans, veterans’ families, active duty military personnel, and their families.

**WHO CAN BE AN NAU RSVP VOLUNTEER?**

Anyone aged 55 and over who resides in Apache, Cochise, Coconino, Mohave, Navajo and Santa Cruz counties; regardless of formal education, experience, race, color, national origin (including limited English proficiency), sex; age, political affiliation, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. A qualified individual with a disability may be an RSVP volunteer. To serve as an RSVP volunteer, an individual must agree to serve without compensation and meet other requirements in this handbook. There are no membership fees to join.

**WHERE DO VOLUNTEERS SERVE?**

RSVP Volunteers are placed with nonprofit and governmental agencies located in our service area that have signed memorandums of understanding. Each Partner Agency meets a community need and offers ways for you to utilize your experience, knowledge, talents, and skills. The Partner Agency accepts responsibility for supervising its assigned volunteers. It is the organization to which you will report, and it may require you to complete its own background checks and paperwork in addition to that required by RSVP.
WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING AN RSVP VOLUNTEER?

- **Personalized Assistance**  
  RSVP staff will work with you to identify a volunteer opportunity that will meet your individual needs. We will match your skills, interests, schedule, and geographic availability with a volunteer position that is right for you. We will continue to be available to provide ongoing information and support as your volunteer needs evolve.

- **Be Part of a National Movement**  
  Mature adults 55 years and older are giving thousands of hours daily to positively impact the communities they live in. Your hours will be counted with those of your peers to demonstrate to policy makers and the community the impact of senior volunteerism on a local and national level. Help send the message that mature adults are making meaningful contributions, solving problems, and bringing our communities together.

- **Training Opportunities**  
  Learn new skills in areas related to your volunteer service and other areas of interest to you.

- **Community Involvement**  
  Through volunteering you will learn much more about your community, service providers, and other non-profit agencies.

- **Volunteer Recognition**  
  RSVP celebrates your accomplishments and honors the work that you do. This takes a variety of forms, including special events, trainings, and opportunities offered to RSVP members.

- **Supplemental Insurance**  
  As an RSVP member you will be covered by supplemental insurance (personal liability, excess automobile liability, and accident) when you volunteer. In the unfortunate event that something happens to you while volunteering, or while traveling to and from your volunteer position, the insurance will help cover deductions and out-of-pocket expenses related to the accident (see Appendix A).
WHAT ARE A VOLUNTEER’S RESPONSIBILITIES?

- **Attend the Volunteer Orientation and Trainings**
  RSVP and its Partner Agencies conduct volunteer orientations and trainings to help make your volunteer experience enriching and of high quality. RSVP Volunteers must take advantage of these mandatory meetings and trainings and are encouraged to participate in optional events.

- **Follow Partner Agency Policies and Guidelines**
  When volunteering you must follow the Partner Agency’s policies and guidelines for volunteers. Any concerns regarding the policies and guidelines should be taken to the Partner Agency supervisor. If concerns are not resolved, contact the RSVP Program Coordinator.

  Partner Agencies should orient you with the following information. If they do not, ask them for the information:
  - The history and purpose of the agency.
  - Your role at the agency, including a written ‘job’ description.
  - The impact your service has on the clients and/or community.
  - The kinds of clients the agency serves.
  - Who your supervisor(s) are.
  - The policies and procedures of the agency for a volunteer (i.e., attendance, dress code, check-in procedure for your job site, etc.).
  - What you can and cannot do while volunteering.
  - The location of restrooms, coat racks, workspace, parking areas, the lounge or lunch areas, etc.
  - Who to go to with your questions and concerns.

- **Be On Time**
  If you are unable to arrive at your scheduled time, or cannot serve at a designated time, please notify your Partner Agency supervisor with as much advance notice as possible.

- **Maintain Confidentiality**
  Confidentiality is the cornerstone of a trusting relationship between volunteers, clients, Partner Agencies, and RSVP. Some volunteer opportunities involve knowing sensitive information about the individuals being served. Issues or concerns regarding clients should only be discussed with the Partner Agency supervisor. It is important to never release the name, address, phone number, or any other information that may identify the client to anyone outside the agency. Breach of confidentiality is cause for termination of all volunteer placements. For your own safety, it is also important to only release your personal details to RSVP and agency-designated staff.
• **Report Volunteer Hours to Your Partner Agency**
  It is important that RSVP knows how much time you spend volunteering at your assigned partner agency. It provides us with a record to validate dates of service when a supplemental insurance claim is necessary and hours are used in progress reports to demonstrate RSVP’s effectiveness to our funding sources. Volunteer hours indicate that you are an active volunteer, which allows you to participate in recognition events and remain eligible for the excess insurance coverage.

  Your Partner Agency will report your hours to RSVP electronically on a monthly basis through our website. If for any reason your Partner Agency is not reporting your hours please contact your Program Coordinator.

• **Refrain from the Use of Drugs, including Alcohol**
  The use of illegal drugs and alcohol, or being under the influence of the same, while performing hours of service is strictly prohibited and is cause for termination of all volunteer placements.

• **Demonstrate Respect Toward Others**
  RSVP and the Partner Agencies are committed to providing a safe environment for volunteers as well as an environment in which people are treated with dignity, decency, and respect. You are expected to demonstrate these commitments while performing your hours of service. Failure to do so is cause for termination of all volunteer placements.

• **Report Accidents**
  If you are involved in an accident while volunteering, report it to both your Partner Agency supervisor and the RSVP Program Coordinator immediately, even if you do not feel you need medical attention at the time.

• **Notify Us of Changes in Contact Information**
  Notify your RSVP Program Coordinator if there are any changes in your contact information.

**WHAT IS A VOLUNTEER'S LEGAL STATUS?**

RSVP Volunteers are NOT employees of the Partner Agency, the Senior Corps, the Civic Service Institute, the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences, Northern Arizona University, the Corporation for National and Community Service, or the Federal Government.
WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE PROHIBITED FOR VOLUNTEERS?

When at a Partner Agency providing services, you shall not:

- give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any form of proselytizing
- participate in any activity that may be construed to influence the outcome of any election or engage in voter registration or lobbying activity
- perform any service or duty or engage in any activity which would supplant the hiring of, result in the displacement of, or impair existing contracts for service by paid providers of such activities

You also shall not perform any of the above activities while representing RSVP (including, but not limited to, wearing your RSVP name badge or other Senior Corps identification).

REPORTING VOLUNTEER HOURS

It is very important for RSVP, the Partner Agency, and the volunteer to record the volunteer’s hours of service. For the volunteer, it is vital to ensuring receipt of the program benefits of secondary insurance. Recording hours documents the contribution RSVP volunteers are making in communities throughout our service areas and is a requirement by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Volunteer hours will be reported on a monthly basis by the partner agency where you volunteer. Hours are due to RSVP by the 10th of the month for the preceding month.

HOW MAY VOLUNTEERS BE SEPARATED FROM RSVP?

Circumstances (e.g., move out of the area, extended illness) sometimes make it necessary for a volunteer to stop volunteering. If your circumstances change or you feel you need to make a change in your volunteer activities, please contact your local RSVP Program Coordinator. Sometimes it is necessary for RSVP to terminate a volunteer from RSVP volunteer service. RSVP may terminate an RSVP volunteer for cause including, but not limited to, extensive and unauthorized absences; misconduct; inability to perform assignments; a breach of confidentiality; working under the influence of illegal drugs or under the influence of alcohol; sexual harassment while volunteering; or workplace violence.

Any volunteer who is terminated is entitled to an appeal. The volunteer shall notify the Senior Corps Director in writing of his/her desire to appeal within five (5) days of the date of the notice termination and may submit a written statement of explanation with the request. All appeals will be investigated by the Senior Corps Director who will advise the appealing volunteer in writing of the decision within thirty (30) days of receipt of the appeal request. If this decision is unsatisfactory, the volunteer may appeal in writing within five (5) business days to the Assistant Director of the Civic Service
Institute. The Assistant Director will investigate and respond within thirty (30) days of receipt of appeal. The decision of the Assistant Director is final.

CNCS REQUIRED INFORMATION
As an RSVP volunteer, it is our responsibility to make you aware of the following information:

- Neither the grantee nor any volunteer station requests or receives compensation from the beneficiaries of Senior Corps volunteers.
- Any volunteer station financial support of the Senior Corps project is not a precondition for that station to obtain volunteer service.
- A Senior Corps volunteer does not receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardian, or members of their family, or friends.
- Grant funds are not used to finance labor or anti-labor organizations or related activity.

CHANGES TO THE HANDBOOK
The RSVP Program and its sponsor reserve the right to change this handbook at any time.
Appendix A
RSVP Supplemental Insurance

IMPORTANT! The following is secondary coverage. Any insurance the RSVP Volunteer has, such as Medicare, supplemental health insurance, or auto insurance shall be billed first.

ACCIDENT INSURANCE
Accident insurance covers RSVP Volunteers for personal injury during travel between their home and their volunteer station, while at the volunteer station, during meal periods, when a volunteer is providing services, and while attending training, recognition activities, and other NAU RSVP meetings.

Insurance benefits also include up to $50.00 for repair of eyeglass frames and up to $50.00 for repair or replacement of eyeglass prescription lenses that are damaged as a result of an accident during your volunteer service.

PERSONAL LIABILITY
Personal liability protects the RSVP volunteer up to one million dollars if sued for personal injury or property damage while doing your volunteer activity.

EXCESS AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY INSURANCE
Excess automobile liability insurance protects the RSVP Volunteer for both bodily injury or property damage if an automobile liability claim occurs while doing your volunteer activities, including driving from your home to the volunteer job site. This is liability insurance and does not include collision insurance.