



# RSVP of Dane County, Inc.

## Volunteer Handbook

*.....Where Volunteers Make a Difference!*

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## **WELCOME**

Welcome to RSVP! We are grateful that you have chosen to serve your community through our organization. You are joining the ranks of over 1600 volunteers who serve every day through RSVP, helping to make Dane County a better place. You have made the decision to spend some of your retirement or flexible time providing service by sharing your skills, knowledge, and life experiences to help others. We hope that you will find your assignment so rewarding that you will share your volunteer story with friends, family, and neighbors. We know our RSVP volunteers are our best recruiters! So, please help us spread the word! We need more volunteers like you! Thank you for your service! –Margie Zutter, Executive Director

## **MISSION**

**To make a positive impact in the community by recruiting volunteers 55 and older to help deliver priority services to people of all ages, providing Dane County with a valuable resource.**

## **VISION**

**RSVP aspires to build and expand a community wide network of volunteers and organizations that unites compassionate, experienced adults with meaningful and fulfilling service opportunities, which enrich the lives of the volunteers while enhancing support for people in need.**

## **HISTORY**

In 1969, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) was created as a national volunteer program under the Administration on Aging as part of the Older Americans Act. In 1971, eleven programs were launched, and they became part of the National Volunteer Agency, ACTION (now the Corporation for National and Community Service). In 1972, we became the first RSVP program in Wisconsin and then in 2000, added a Foster Grandparent Program (FGP). Nationwide, 220,000 Senior Corps volunteers in RSVP, FGP, and Senior Companion programs, serve 57 million hours annually. With over 1,600 volunteers, RSVP of Dane County is one of the largest Senior Corps programs in the nation.

RSVP seeks to:

- Utilize the skills, knowledge and life experiences of people who are retired, helping them lead healthy productive lives.
- Respond to increasing requests for volunteers to help meet critical needs.
- Support older adults in their volunteer role.
- Provide opportunities for intergenerational projects and age-integrated activities.
- Plan programming in cooperation with the groups, agencies, and institutions with which it is involved, as needed and requested.
- Involve volunteers in planning and decision-making on community programs, boards, and committees.
- increase public awareness concerning contributions and needs of people age 55 and over and improve the image of aging.

## **VOLUNTEER BENEFITS**

**“RSVP NEWS NOTES”** is a newsletter published quarterly each year by RSVP. Volunteers are informed of new opportunities, events, and activities involving RSVP volunteers.

**“E-Xtra”** is an electronic newsletter published quarterly by RSVP. It provides brief articles and updates to keep volunteers informed between the print editions of *News Notes*.

**TRAINING/ORIENTATION** RSVP volunteers are encouraged to explore exciting new areas of interest in their volunteer assignments. Volunteer Stations and RSVP cooperate to provide the training and orientation necessary for the successful involvement of all RSVP volunteers.

**INFORMATION AND REFERRAL** RSVP is a part of the National, State and Local aging network. Questions or concerns on aging issues can be directed to RSVP staff members. They will help find the necessary information to meet your needs.

**RECOGNITION EVENTS** All “active” RSVP volunteers are recognized for their contribution of services at a special gathering once per year. A meal or refreshments, music, speakers and FUN celebrate the involvement of the RSVP volunteers in community activities.

Two volunteer awards are presented to RSVP volunteers at the Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event. The Presidential Service Award is presented to volunteers who achieve a lifetime accumulation of 4000 volunteer service hours. The RSVP Length of Service award is presented to those providing volunteer service with RSVP for 20 consecutive years or more.

**RSVP NAME BADGE AND LANYARD** A name or ID badge is given to individuals enrolled in Drivers Services, Intergenerational assignments, or upon request. We suggest that you wear your ID badge during your volunteer assignment to give RSVP visibility in the community and identify you as an approved worker to those you serve.

### **REIMBURSEMENTS:**

Volunteers who are eligible for reimbursable expenses, (**Driver Escorts and Home Delivered Meal Drivers**), will receive instruction from Driver Services staff about how to complete driving and reimbursement forms. See Driver Services instructions.

### **Hours Logs and Time Sheets:**

“Active” volunteer status with RSVP depends upon your report of volunteer hours. You may report your hours of service by signing in and identifying yourself as an RSVP volunteer at your Volunteer Station. The volunteer supervisor can then report your hours to RSVP for you. If you are keeping track of your own hours, please either e-mail your hours to your RSVP staff representative or fax your hours to the attention of your RSVP staff representative.

**INSURANCE:**

“Active RSVP volunteers” are covered by Accident and Personal Liability Insurance. This insurance protects volunteers while they are volunteering. In addition, volunteers who drive their own automobiles/vehicles while performing volunteer duties are covered by Excess Automobile Liability Insurance.

**SOME IMPORTANT POINTS REGARDING OUR INSURANCE:**

1. This coverage is in excess of and non-contributing with any other valid and collectible insurance you may have. You can only submit claims for any unpaid balances your insurance did not cover.
2. If you drive, you must maintain your personal automobile insurance. Our insurance will not protect you if you allow your insurance to lapse. In addition, you must drive your own vehicle in order to be covered.
3. RSVP’s insurance does not cover damage to your automobile/vehicle.
4. Please refer to your copy of the CIMA Volunteer Accident and Liability Insurance brochure for information on coverage.

**IF AN ACCIDENT OCCURS:** Call the RSVP office as soon as possible. Please report all incidents even if you feel that no medical attention is needed. All accidents must be reported to our insurance company within 30 days and all bills submitted by one year. We will send you a claim form to fill out.

If you have any questions regarding RSVP volunteer insurance, call the RSVP office at 238-7787. You may also contact our insurance company directly by calling CIMA at 1-800-468-4200 or visit their web site at

[www.CIMAWORLD.COM](http://www.CIMAWORLD.COM)

**Community Resources:** All volunteers are eligible to receive services from the following agencies:

**Aging and Disability Resource Center of Dane County:** (608) Toll-Free: 855-417-6892

Local Phone: 608-240-7400

**Elder Abuse Helpline:** 608-261-9933

## **VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- **Look within yourself:** and know that you really want to help other people. In offering your services, be sure you believe in the value of what you are doing.
- **Be dependable:** Arrive on time. Always call if you are scheduled and cannot be there.
- **Be willing to learn:** Volunteer training is essential for some positions. Training is helpful to you and the people you are serving. You will be happier and more effective on the assignment if you know you are doing what is expected of you.
- **Ask questions:** about anything you do not understand. This will help you avoid letting doubts and frustrations interfere with your work.
- **Report changes in your volunteer status:** We appreciate your call or letter about address, e-mail, or telephone changes. If you no longer wish (or are unable) to volunteer, or you would like to change volunteer assignments, please call the RSVP office and keep us informed of your volunteer status.
- **Refrain from having discussions relating to Political Activities, Religion and Sexual Orientation:** Everyone is entitled to his or her own political, religious or sexual orientation views. However, it's RSVP's policy for all RSVP staff and volunteers to refrain from having discussions relating to these matters while at work or while on assignment with RSVP. We must remain neutral while working with the public and not subject our customers, clients and/or others to views that may not be their own.
- **Respect confidentiality:** Before sharing information about your volunteer work, discuss confidentiality with your Volunteer Station supervisor. If you work directly with people, such as Driver Escorts or Home Delivered Meal Drivers some older adults that you serve may confide in you. Please keep all such conversations and information confidential.
- **Conduct:** When volunteering, an RSVP Volunteer must follow the policies and procedures of the Volunteer Station at which they are volunteering. This includes requirements for training, attendance, dress code or any other guidelines established by the Volunteer Station. Any concerns regarding the agency should be taken first to the station supervisor. If concerns are not resolved, please contact the RSVP Director.

## **VOLUNTEER RIGHTS**

- **Orientation:** You will receive an orientation packet on the RSVP's purpose, service programs, insurance coverage and volunteer opportunities.
- **Volunteer Assignment:** You can expect to be referred to a volunteer assignment where your skills and experience will be used to the best advantage.
- **Welcome and Respect:** You can expect to feel welcome and to be treated with respect at your volunteer site.
- **Training:** You will receive on-site orientation and training to comfortably perform your assigned volunteer tasks by the Volunteer Station.
- **Help:** The Volunteer Station and the RSVP staff will be available to help with any questions or concerns.
- **Meaningful experience:** You have the right to expect your volunteer experience to be meaningful to you. If you are dissatisfied with your assignment, RSVP will attempt to find you another position.
- **Change your assignment:** You have the right to change your assignment, to try new skills or to advance to more challenging tasks. Call the RSVP office to start that process.
- **Grievance:** You have the right to a grievance procedure which provides a means of presenting grievances without fear of reprisals and an appeal process in the event of a termination or other adverse action. Contact the RSVP Director for more information if needed. Please see Grievance Procedure on page 9.

## **POLICIES:**

### **Non-Discrimination – Equal Opportunity**

RSVP of Dane County is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity organization. RSVP will comply with federal, state, and local laws/ordinances prohibiting discrimination and will not discriminate in its recruitment or services of RSVP volunteers or in the operation of RSVP on the basis of race, color, national origin, including individuals with limited English proficiency, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, if the participant is a qualified individual with a disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, or military service. RSVP reserves the right to change categories in accordance with the law. In addition to RSVP's Non-Discrimination Policies, RSVP has Affirmative Action Plans filed with the State of Wisconsin, Dane County, and the City of Madison.

For accommodation information or if you need special accommodations to complete the application process, please contact RSVP of Dane County, Inc. at (608)238-7787

**Nondisplacement of Employed Workers:** RSVP volunteers will 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.

**Prohibited RSVP Volunteer Activities:** RSVP volunteers may not receive a fee for their services from recipients, their legal guardians or members of their families or friends.

In addition, RSVP volunteers will not be assigned to any of the following:

- Electoral Activities, Voter Registration or Transportation to the polls, and efforts to influence legislation;
- Labor or anti-labor activity;
- Providing religious instruction, giving worship services or engaging in proselytization.

### **Compensation from Volunteer/beneficiaries**

RSVP of Dane County nor volunteer stations may request or receive compensation from the beneficiaries of Senior Corps volunteers.

### **Sexual Abuse/Misconduct**

Harassment of sexual, racial, national origin, religious harassment, or on any other grounds is strictly prohibited by RSVP, in any work or service-related settings, including service-related social events and training.

No employee or volunteer shall engage in sexual harassment. RSVP of Dane County wants to help ensure that all employees/volunteers work in an environment free of sexual harassment. See Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Policy Below

Definition of Sexual Harassment:

Unwelcome sexual advances; unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature; or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which shall include, but not be limited to deliberate or repeated unsolicited gestures, graphic materials, verbal or written comments.

### **Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Policy**

RSVP of Dane County, Inc. prohibits and does not tolerate sexual abuse or misconduct in the workplace/volunteer station or during any organization-related activity. RSVP of Dane County, Inc. provides procedures for employees, volunteers, board members or any other victims of sexual abuse or misconduct to report such acts. Those reasonably suspected or believed to have committed sexual abuse or misconduct will be appropriately disciplined, up to and including termination of employment or membership, as well as criminally prosecuted. No employee, volunteer, board member or other person, regardless of his or her title or position has the authority to commit or allow sexual abuse or misconduct.

### **Smoking Policy:**

No smoking is allowed in the RSVP of Dane County office.

### **RSVP Policy on a Drug-Free Work Place-Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace**

RSVP complies with the Federal Drug-free Workplace Act of 1988.

All RSVP volunteers are reminded that RSVP rules, policies, and practices prohibit the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of controlled substances at the RSVP office or work stations.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is important to establish and maintain mutual respect and trust. Keeping information on those you work during your volunteer assignment is essential to good business practice. All volunteers must sign the RSVP of Dane County, Inc. Confidentiality Standard and Agreement form.

### **Firearms Policy**

Firearms and weapons are prohibited:

- Within any building owned, leased or operated by RSVP of Dane County, Inc.
- Within any vehicle owned, leased or operated by RSVP of Dane County, Inc.
- During the conduct of any activity occurring under the authority RSVP of Dane County, Inc.
- This prohibition includes firearms and weapons that are otherwise considered legal, such as concealed carry firearms, pepper spray, knives, mace, etc.

Violation of this policy will lead to disciplinary action that may include the following:

- For volunteers- termination of the privilege of serving as a RSVP of Dane County volunteer;
- For recipients of services-termination of the privilege of receiving services from RSVP of Dane County, Inc.

### **National Service Criminal History Checks:**

Some RSVP volunteers, depending on their volunteer activity, may be required to undergo a National Service Criminal History Check. These are Volunteers that have recurring contact with



children, frail adults or persons with disabilities or other potentially vulnerable individuals  
The names of the checks performed include: National Sex Offender Public Website, Wisconsin Criminal History Background check (WORCS), Wisconsin Circuit Court background check and Dane County Sheriff Background check.

### **Publicity Policy**

All volunteers must read the Consent for Publicity Form, in the back of the Volunteer Handbook. Check yes if you grant RSVP of Dane County permission to use picture, voice, name or other representation please sign the consent form. The consent includes but is not limited to any media presentation, newsletter, social media, brochures, publications, television, recorded presentations, video and exhibits. Check no if you do not give permission.

### **Volunteer Separation Policy**

Volunteers may terminate their volunteer assignment at any time by notifying the RSVP Program Coordinator. RSVP staff will assist the volunteer in locating an alternate volunteer placement when requested. The RSVP Director or a Volunteer Station may separate an RSVP volunteer for cause, including but not limited to, excessive or unauthorized absences, misconduct, and breach in confidentiality or inability to perform assignments or accept supervision

### **Grievance Procedure:**

Upon receiving any oral or written complaint, the RSVP Program Supervisor will determine whether the complaint should be handled informally or formally. Problems or conflicts should be resolved at the lowest level. If the complaint originates within the volunteer station, RSVP Program Supervisor will be part of the complaint process of that volunteer station. Sources of complaints may include: client vs. volunteer, volunteer vs. volunteer, volunteer vs. RSVP Program staff. Please see procedure on pages 10-12

## INTERNAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE (Informal and Formal)

**PURPOSE OF PROCEDURE:** To process complaints: informal and formal and handle severance of volunteers as necessary

**POLICY (IES) RELEVANT TO THE PROCEDURE:** Confidentiality

**STAFF MEMBER RESPONSIBLE:** Appropriate Staff

**STAFF MEMBER SUPERVISOR:** Appropriate Supervisor

**WHO PROVIDES BACK-UP?** Other staff, anyone involved

**WHO ELSE SHOULD BE INVOLVED?** Executive Director

PROCEDURE OUTLINE	WHEN ACCOMPLISHED
<p>1. Upon receiving any oral or written complaint, the RSVP staff member will determine whether the complaint should be handled <u>informally</u> or <u>formally</u>. Problems or conflicts should be resolved at the lowest level. If the complaint originates within a volunteer station, RSVP staff will be part of the complaint process of that volunteer station.</p> <p>Sources of complaints: client vs. client; client vs. volunteer; client vs. RSVP staff; client vs. RSVP vol. station; volunteer vs. volunteer; volunteer vs. RSVP staff</p> <p>*Client is defined as the recipient of a service, e.g. student, parent. A separate D.E. complaint procedure covers Driver Escort volunteers and passengers. Passengers may make a complaint by calling or noting it in the ongoing passenger survey, distributed by volunteer drivers at the end of each ride.</p>	<p>Upon receiving any oral or written complaint</p>
<p>2. <b>Processing <u>Informal</u> Complaints:</b> The staff member will use his/her own judgment in determining whether a complaint fits in this category; however, any questionable complaints should be brought to the attention of the Exec. Director. The staff member will discuss the complaint with the complainant, and make a decision, informing the complainant of the basis for the decision (applicable rules or guidelines). The complaint does not need to be written up in a formal manner. If the same complaint happens more than once, the staff member will need to start documenting it.</p>	<p>As soon as possible (within 20 working days)</p>

<p><b>3. Processing Formal Complaints:</b> These complaints are of a more serious nature, e.g. harassment, discrimination, physical acts, acts of violence, illegal activities, accidents or incidents involving liability issues.</p> <p>a. The RSVP staff member will inform the Exec. Director of the complaint and discuss action(s) to be taken.</p> <p>b. The RSVP staff member will provide the complainant with a copy of this procedure and the “Service Complaint Form.”</p> <p>c. The RSVP staff member will review the complaint form and gather information from all parties involved. The information gathering will include a discussion with the complainant.</p> <p>d. The RSVP staff member will inform the complainant, within 20 working days of the complaint, of the action(s) to be taken. If the decision results in volunteer or client severance from the program or services, a letter needs to be written to the individual stating that termination has occurred and the reason for termination. The letter will be sent via certified mail so that RSVP receives notification of receipt of our correspondence.</p> <p>e. The RSVP staff member will create a confidential file which will include all written information and notes about the complaint, decision, and any correspondence. This file will be kept by the Exec. Director in a locked file cabinet.</p> <p>f. The complainant may appeal the initial decision and action to be taken and request discussions, meetings, hearings in the following sequence: appropriate staff members, Exec. Director, Personnel Committee, Board of Directors. Decisions at each level must be communicated to the complainant within 20 working days of the request for meetings or hearings.</p>	<p>Immediately</p> <p>As soon as possible</p> <p>Within 20 working days of the complaint</p>
<p><b>4. Formal Service Delivery Complaint Procedure:</b> The RSVP staff member will provide the complainant with “How To File a Service Delivery Discrimination Complaint” and the “Service Delivery Discrimination Complaint Form” (provided by the State of Wisconsin) when requested. The complainant will be notified that these forms are available.</p>	<p>As requested by the volunteer or client</p>

**RSVP OF DANE COUNTY, INC.**  
**Service Complaint Form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Complaint: Please include date (and time if available) of incident, names of employees or volunteers involved with incident, and any important details.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Adverse Impact on Complainant:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time Received by RSVP:

\_\_\_\_\_

Referred by:

\_\_\_\_\_

Received by:

\_\_\_\_\_

