



## **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program** *Serving Hickman and McCracken County*

### **- RSVP Volunteer Handbook -**

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## **Purpose**

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is federally funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service and locally sponsored by the Paducah, McCracken County Senior Citizens, Inc, along with the United Way of McCracken County.



The purpose of the program is to link adults age 55 and over to meaningful volunteer opportunities in the community for non-for-profit agencies.

## **Mission**

To promote volunteerism, particularly among persons 55 years of age and older, and provide opportunities for them to pursue their interests and use their skills and abilities help meet the critical needs of Hickman and McCracken Counties.

## **Vision**

To be recognized by the Hickman and McCracken County communities as a reliable and dynamic source of rewarding volunteer opportunities for seniors and as a primary supplier of senior volunteers to serve the community's critical human needs.

## **Goals**

RSVP promotes the use of older persons as a community resource in planning for community improvement and in delivery of volunteer services. Achievement of RSVP's purpose is facilitated by a coordinated use from resources of the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Paducah-McCracken County Senior Citizens, Inc., and the community to achieve the goals of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program which are to:

1. Develop a variety of opportunities for community service for age 55 or older persons willing to share their experiences, abilities, and skills for the betterment of the community and themselves.

2. Ensure that volunteer assignments are made consistent with the interests and abilities of the volunteers.
3. Ensure that volunteer assignments are scheduled at not-for-profit agencies in the community and meet basic and critical needs for the community.
4. Ensure that volunteers are provided the necessary training, orientation, support, supervision and recognition for their contribution of service to the community.
5. Provide reasonable opportunity for community and volunteer involvement and support in development, operation, and appraisal of the RSVP program.
6. Develop local support to supplement available federal sources, and to ensure that program expenditures are incurred at the lowest possible costs consistent with the effective operation of the project, as required by the Corporation for National and Community Service regulations.
7. Team together with other community agencies and organizations involved in the field of ageing and volunteerism.
8. Develop a sound, locally controlled senior volunteer program with community support.



### **What is the RSVP?**

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program provides volunteer opportunities for persons 55 years of age and older. The purpose is to enrich retirement for older adults through significant community service work.

RSVP encourages seniors to bring a lifetime of talent, experience, skills and hobbies to community projects and organizations needing volunteer talent.

A national program, RSVP is partially funded through the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency. In addition, RSVP receives financial support from the United Way of Paducah-McCracken County. In joining the program, you become part of a national movement of hundreds of thousands of volunteers striving to help their communities.

The local program is sponsored by the Paducah-McCracken County Senior Citizens. The program began in McCracken County in 1980 and in Hickman County in 2000.

### **Who can be a Volunteer?**

Any person 55 years of age or older, who wants to share the benefits of a lifetime of living is eligible. There is no restriction based on education, income, or experience. Anyone who wants to feel useful, needed, and appreciated will profit from becoming a part of the RSVP network.

### **What do volunteers do?**

RSVP Volunteers serve, without pay, on a regular or periodic basis on community assignments at libraries, senior centers, social service agencies, nursing homes, schools, and many other non-profit organizations. They visit shut-ins, assist in the delivery of meals, and work with children and youth. They act as office workers, tutors, and volunteer coordinators.

Each volunteer contributes an average of four hours per week – a figure that reflects dedication of RSVP volunteers.

We do not require a minimum number of service hours; however, to remain an active RSVP member, you must volunteer at least once every three months. You decide the hours and the days that you want to volunteer.

We value whatever contribution of time you can spare, and we will tailor the assignment to fit your needs and preferences.

If you later find that your volunteer work is conflicting with other commitments, simply call the RSVP office and make arrangements to alter your assignment schedule.

### **What is a volunteer station?**

Any place where RSVP members volunteer is called a volunteer station. It can be any public or private non-profit organization or health agency. The volunteer station must sign the RSVP Memorandum of Understanding, which lists RSVP policies. The station agrees to offer volunteers appropriate and specific assignments on a regularly scheduled basis.



RSVP volunteers do not replace paid staff at a station. No one at a volunteer station will ask you to do anything that the staff is unwilling to do.

The station staff provides you with supervision and the materials you need in order to work effectively. The station supervisor explains assignments and answers specific questions.

### **Reporting Hours**

Volunteers report their hours of service on a monthly basis, usually through the volunteer station. Many volunteers serve in more than one capacity. Crediting your volunteer hours to different groups is perfectly okay. Suppose you are a senior center volunteer, a retired teacher, and also a member of RSVP.

Each organization needs to know how many hours you gave for its purposes. So, if you are a part of several volunteer groups, support them by reporting your hours faithfully to each one and then reporting your total hours to RSVP.

RSVP needs to know about all your hours because these records prove to the community and the nation that seniors, 55 and older, are a great contributing resource.

## **What are the benefits of volunteering through RSVP?**

### Insurance

As an enrolled RSVP member, you are covered by supplemental volunteer liability, accident and excess automobile liability insurance at no cost to you. The insurance covers you while you're working at an agreed upon assignment, as well as while you're en route to and from the station.

In case of an accident, you should call the RSVP office at (270) 442-8993. A claim form will be sent to you to be completed and returned to the RSVP.

You should include all bills and statement of Medicare (if you are enrolled in Medicare). RSVP insurance pays expenses in excess of benefits paid by Medicare.

### Recognition

Once a year, RSVP sponsors a Recognition Event for acknowledging its volunteers and their efforts, along with articles on our website. All volunteers receive an RSVP pin that the time of enrollment, RSVP recognizes its member for each year of service. In addition, each RSVP volunteer is given a name badge and a member card. We also hold enrichment banquets, get-togethers, holiday parties to recognize the tremendous donation of time our volunteers give to the community.

### Orientation

The RSVP provides a basic orientation to the RSVP program, but each volunteer station will provide orientation once the volunteer is on the job for the specific duties required of that placement.

### Newsletter

The RSVP newsletter, "Senior Connection", is mailed to all enrolled volunteers and volunteer stations. It contains information on service opportunities and helpful information for senior citizens. RSVP members are encouraged to submit articles, poems, humorous stories, etc. for publication in the newsletter.

## **Volunteer Responsibilities**

1. Attend the volunteer orientation and training.
2. Be on time.
3. Sign in and out on the RSVP time sheets provided for you.
4. Notify your station if you will not be able to volunteer on that day.
5. Ask questions at your volunteer site if you do not understand or are not sure about something. If you still have questions, please call us at the RSVP office.
6. If you are in an accident, notify the RSVP office and your station.
7. Keep station business and any client information confidential.
8. Notify the RSVP office if you are having any problems with your volunteer site.
9. Notify the RSVP of any changes in your address or phone number.



## **Travel Information**

Free transportation is provided from the Paducah Area Transit Service (PATS) for volunteers who have no other method of transportation. These rides are for to and from volunteer sites only. Notify the PATS service you are a volunteer needing transportation when you call to set up a pick up time.

## **Summary of RSVP Benefits for Volunteers**

1. Free volunteer placement
2. Opportunity to use your experience and skills
3. Opportunities for community involvement
4. Satisfaction of providing services to others that might not have otherwise been met.
5. Recognition of the members volunteer service

6. Free supplemental accident and liability insurance while volunteering
7. Newsletter with helpful information and new volunteer opportunities
8. Opportunity to present the image of Seniors as contributors within the community through significant community service
9. A chance to learn something new
10. Satisfaction of knowing you are making a difference.

### **What are volunteers responsible for in the program?**

RSVP asks each volunteer to observe the following principals while performing any volunteer assignment:

The volunteer assignment is important to the volunteer station, to RSVP, and to the public. Please perform the duties to the best of your ability, observe the days and hours agreed upon, cooperate with staff and other volunteers, and follow the policies set for the by the volunteer station. If a problem should arise with regard to the assignment, please speak with the station supervisor and/or someone at the RSVP office.

Please inform your station supervisor if you cannot report to your assignment, will be late, or must leave early. We realize that emergencies and conflicting commitments will arise.

If you will be away for an extended period of time, or if you choose to discontinue serving at a particular volunteer station, please inform the agency where you volunteer and the RSVP office in advance.

If while working at your volunteer assignment, you encounter confidential information concerning the volunteer station, its employees, and/or the people it serves, you must maintain the confidentiality of that information.

Please keep the RSVP office informed of any changes in your phone number, your address, and your ability to serve as a volunteer. Also, please notify the RSVP office of any problems, which may arise at your station.

### **Changes in Assignment**

RSVP realizes you may want to change your assignment. You might want to try out new skills or advance to more difficult tasks.

Whatever the reason, RSVP will accept your request for a change at any time. You may either make a selection from existing opportunities or suggest specific interests and let RSVP do the legwork.

### **Special Projects**

Realizing that many volunteers want to serve their community but still do all they planned during retirement, RSVP offers short term assignments.

Many agencies need help with mailings, office work, fund raising, and other projects only at certain times of the year. RSVP tries to fill their requests for “now and then” assistance.

If you would like to assist with short term volunteer projects, please inform the RSVP staff, and they will contact you when short term assignments become available.



### **RSVP fits YOUR schedule**

RSVP strives to maintain flexibility in the scheduling of assignments. There is no minimum number of service hours required. However, an RSVP volunteer must serve and report at least one hour every three months to be considered a member of RSVP.

Assignment hours vary according to the needs of the agencies, but you may select an assignment that suits your schedule. We realize that you may have planned to do things during retirement that might conflict with your volunteering. If you want to travel, work part-time,, or alter your work schedule due to conflicting commitments, just notify your station and the RSVP office in advance.

### **Advisory Council**

The RSVP Advisory Council meets bi-monthly to advise and assist the RSVP operation. Its functions include planning volunteer recognition events, evaluation and future direction of the program. At least one quarter of the members are age 55 or older. If you have an interest in serving on the RSVP Advisory Council, please call the RSVP office.

### **Volunteer Separation**

When a volunteer is inactive for more than 30 days, they will be placed on inactive status. A former volunteer can be re-activated once they resume volunteering.

Volunteers may also be separated by the RSVP Director for cause, including, but not limited to: excessive or unauthorized absences, inability to work with supervision, inability to perform assigned projects, or misconduct.

### **Appeal Process**

All appeals to action affecting an RSVP volunteer must be made in writing to the RSVP Director and a copy sent to the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council will review the complaint and assess which actions will be taken to correct the situation.

### **Program Evaluation**

The RSVP office conducts program evaluation surveys periodically to assess the effectiveness of the program and volunteer satisfaction. Please take the time to fill out the surveys and return them to our office. We value your feedback.

Please call the RSVP office you have any other questions, want to give us feedback, or just want to talk. We love to hear from you!

