

# Remarkable Senior Volunteer Program RSVP



**VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

Friendship Centers of Emmet  
County  
1322 Anderson Road  
Petoskey, MI 49770

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Dear Volunteer,

The Friendship Centers of Emmet County are pleased that you have decided to become a member of the Remarkable Seniors Volunteer Program. We never cease to be amazed at the number of local citizens who are so willing to serve others in our community.

This Volunteer Manual was developed to provide you with a general overview of the RSVP program and the roles and responsibilities of the RSVP staff, the organizations where RSVP volunteers serve, and the volunteers themselves.

Our pledge to you is to do everything possible to make your volunteer experience rewarding and meaningful. Please feel free to call us with any questions, problems, or suggestions you may have throughout your RSVP volunteer experience.

Again, thank you for sharing your experience and compassion for others to help tackle important issues in your community.

Sincerely,

Mary Margaret Hornbaker, RSVP Volunteer Coordinator  
and  
Christy Blackall, RSVP Program Director

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## **What is RSVP?**

The Friendship Centers Remarkable Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), recruits' adults 60 and older to use their talents and life experience to help meet community needs through volunteer service. RSVP offers maximum flexibility and choice for its volunteers by matching the personal interests and with meaningful services opportunities throughout Emmet County.

RSVP is dedicated to meeting community needs in Emmet County by engaging volunteers whose experience and wisdom can make a difference. Ongoing education and support are integral components of RSVP, ensuring that volunteers are equipped and encouraged throughout their service. Through careful monitoring, data collection, and evaluation by program staff, volunteers can see the impact their efforts in addressing identified community needs.

RSVP is a program of Friendship Centers of Emmet County (FCEC). FCEC is a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of the people it serves. The Friendship Centers Mission is: "to ensure that all senior citizens have the opportunities, information and services necessary to live healthy, safe and active lives of dignity."

## **Location**

RSVP is located within the FCEC offices at:  
1322 Anderson Road, Petoskey, MI 49770  
(231)-347-3211 ext. 129 or ext. 130

## **VOLUNTEER INFORMATION**

### **Who can become an RSVP Volunteer?**

Anyone who is 60 and older who has a desire to be involved with their community by sharing their time, skills, and talents. There are no requirements for education, income, experience, dues or membership fees to join.

### **What can RSVP volunteers do?**

RSVP concentrates on areas of importance and priority to our community. Currently those areas are food security, tax preparation, and improved access to medical care. As needs change, so do our focus areas.

### **Examples:**

- Volunteer at congregate meal sites.
- Volunteer at food pantries.
- Volunteer to tutor a child during school or provide classroom assistance.
- Assist seniors with Medicaid counseling or tax assistance.
- Support environmental concerns by volunteering for Little Traverse Conservancy, or other agencies supporting wildlife and nature preservation.
- Provide companionship and help with activities at nursing and care facilities.

Volunteers are matched with opportunities based on personal preference and the nature of the position. Each volunteer opportunity is provided, required training, location of the station, station contact information, etc. Additional opportunities are always being explored.

## **WHAT RSVP OFFERS**

### **What does RSVP offer active volunteers?**

#### **Volunteer Mileage Reimbursement**

- Mileage reimbursement is made available to member volunteers who would otherwise not be able to volunteer due to out of pocket expenses incurred while volunteering.
- Mileage is reimbursed to a volunteer when volunteer submits a mileage request with their supervisor's signature and has submitted the time sheet to RSVP no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month.
- Mileage reimbursement is \$ .70 cents per mile with a cap of thirty-five (\$35.00) dollars per month. No checks will be issued under the amount of \$5.00; balance will be carried to the following month.

#### **Volunteer Recognition**

It is our goal to coordinate recognition events annually. These events provide an opportunity to connect with friends and hear about the work that other volunteers are doing. It is also an opportunity to recognize those who have been working so hard and spreading good cheer.

#### **The opportunity to learn new skills or enhance current skills**

You may have skills you would like to learn and just never got around to it and we may have a volunteer opportunity that would be a good match. Or perhaps, you have a hobby that is a good match for a volunteer opportunity.

#### **Receive the Silver Threads Newsletter**

Receive the Friendship Centers monthly newsletter and stay informed about upcoming volunteer opportunities as well as things going on in our community.

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

- A way to give back to your community
- On-going follow-up and support
- Supplemental accidental insurance while you volunteer
- A way of staying mentally and physically young
- Social interaction and a chance to meet new people
- An opportunity to learn new skills
- A variety of volunteer opportunities
- Flexibility to try new things

## **VOLUNTEER STATIONS**

### **Where can someone volunteer?**

Requests for volunteers are accepted by registered non-profit stations throughout Emmet County.

### **What is a Volunteer Station?**

A Volunteer Station is a public or non-profit entity, or a proprietary health care organization located in Emmet county, that has a written agreement with RSVP to provide volunteer opportunities. RSVP volunteers help volunteer stations fulfill their mission of serving seniors, students, the disabled and veterans in the community who are experiencing a need. Volunteer Stations agree to provide a safe environment for RSVP volunteers and accept the responsibility of volunteer supervision. Key individuals from Volunteer Stations assist with volunteer training.

### **Fitting in at your Volunteer Station**

Volunteer Stations appreciate and value the time and talent you offer. When volunteering, don't be shy... ask questions about the organization. Below is a list of details you may want to know about the Volunteer Station:

- Know and understand your role at the Volunteer Station
- Understand what change you are working to create, or the problem you are working to address

- Understand the mission or purpose of the Station
- Know your supervisor and the station staff you work with. They will answer your questions and address any concerns you may have.
- Know what policies and procedures you are subject to as a volunteer, including the check-in procedure for your station
- Learn the little things such as the location of the restrooms, coat racks, workspace, parking area, the lounge or lunch area, etc.

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **Background Checks**

Criminal background and sex offender registry checks are conducted for RSVP volunteers by RSVP staff. These checks are to ensure and maximize the safety of volunteers and clients served.

### **Conduct**

Volunteers are expected to be professional. When volunteering, an RSVP volunteer must act in accordance with the Volunteer Station's guidelines for staff and/or volunteers. Any concerns regarding the guidelines should be taken to the station supervisor. If concerns are not resolved, please contact the RSVP Director or Coordinator.

Timeliness is essential, please be on time. If you are unable to arrive at your scheduled time, please notify the station supervisor. If you are going to be absent, please follow the process outlined by either the RSVP staff or the station staff for your volunteer assignment.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is the cornerstone of a trusting relationship between volunteers, clients, Volunteer Stations, 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 station supervisor. It is important to never release the name, address, phone number or any other information that may identify the client



to anyone except the Volunteer Station. For your own safety, it is also important to only release your personal details to RSVP and volunteer station staff.

### **Reporting Volunteer Hours**

It is very important that RSVP knows how much time you spend volunteering. RSVP keeps track of volunteer hours as a means of assessing the program's performance. Volunteer hours indicate that you are an active volunteer, which allows you to participate in recognition events and remain eligible for volunteer liability coverage. Volunteers are required to indicate the number of hours served, name of the station where volunteer assignment took place, and list the type of volunteer activity that occurred. Signatures are required on time sheets for those requesting mileage reimbursement.

### **Volunteer Safety Policy**

Volunteer safety is important to RSVP. Concerns regarding safety at your volunteer station should be reported to the station supervisor and RSVP Coordinator as soon as possible. If you are involved in an accident while on assignment, please notify the RSVP office within 24 hours. Should your medical, physical, or other conditions change at any time, please inform the RSVP Coordinator.

### **Inclement Weather**

In the case of inclement weather or poor road conditions, please exercise caution. Use your best judgment in deciding to travel to the volunteer assignment. Please notify the Volunteer Station directly if you will be absent. Ask your volunteer station if they offer closure text alerts for your convenience.

## **Volunteer Insurance Service – CIMA**

All active volunteers are provided with accident, medical, volunteer liability, and auto liability insurance, which supplements existing insurance policies at no cost to the volunteer. The coverage protects an RSVP volunteer during volunteer assignment (travel to and from the station, and while you are performing duties at the station). For volunteers using a personal auto, minimum levels of liability vehicle insurance are required as mandated by the State of Michigan.

In case of an accident, auto or otherwise, the volunteer should:

- Report the incident immediately to the RSVP Coordinator, who will notify our insurance carrier, CIMA.
- File appropriate claim forms with his or her own primary insurance provider including Medicare or Medicaid.
- Keep insurance statement and itemized bills, as they will be needed to file a claim.

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

No persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, marital or parental status, pregnancy, age, disability (mental or physical), height, weight, military service, citizenship status, political affiliation, reprisal, complaint status, genetic information (including family medical history) or any other category protected by state or federal law, shall be excluded from participating in RSVP.

## **Drug and Alcohol Policy**

The use of illegal drugs or alcohol, or being under the influence of the same, while performing hours of service is strictly prohibited and shall be cause for termination of all volunteer placements through the RSVP.

## **Volunteer Termination**

Volunteers may be terminated at any time by agency partners and/or RSVP. Grounds for termination may include, but are not limited to:

- Breach of confidentiality
- Physical, mental, or emotional inability to serve
- Incompatibility with agency partners and/or RSVP staff
- Offensive behavior, sexual harassment, or workplace violence
- Consumption of illegal drugs or alcohol immediately prior to or during volunteer assignments.
- Lack of expected professional standards, such as hygiene and dress.

## **Policy Changes**

Policies in this handbook are subject to change without notice.

## **VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROHIBITIONS**

### **Volunteer Responsibilities**

When accepting a volunteer assignment with RSVP, responsibilities include:

- Attend the volunteer orientation and trainings.
- Report to your assignment on time.
- Sign the RSVP time sheet monthly so your hours can be properly recorded.
- Notify your station if you will be absent.
- Ask questions at your volunteer station if you do not understand or are not sure about something. If you still have questions, please call the RSVP office.
- If you are in an accident, notify the RSVP office and your station, asap.
- Keep station business and client information confidential.
- Notify the RSVP office if you are having problems at your volunteer station.
- Notify the RSVP office if there are changes in your contact information.

- Notify the RSVP office if there are changes in your station personnel or contact information.

### **Prohibitions for RSVP Volunteers**

- Volunteers are not permitted to engage in any of the following activities:
  - Electoral activities
  - Voter registration
  - Voter transportation to polls
  - Efforts to influence legislation
- Volunteers should not engage in any activity which would otherwise be performed by any employee or result in the displacement of any employee.
- Volunteers do not receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardians, members of their family, or friends.
- Volunteers do not give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or attempt to convert others to another opinion or religion while volunteering.
- Volunteers should report any “in-kind” gratuities given to them by the station. This includes:
  - Value of food or beverage while on duty.
  - Value of any tokens of appreciation *from the station*. Gifts from clients are not permitted.
  - Value of any other contributions that were paid for by the station and given to the volunteer.

Your questions concerns and/or comments are always appreciated by FCEC/RSVP. Please don't hesitate to call for a private, confidential meeting with your RSVP Program Director any time.

**Welcome to the Friendship Centers Remarkable Senior Volunteer Program!**