

# FiftyForward RSVP

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## Volunteer Handbook

2019

FiftyForward RSVP is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

## **Introduction**

Thank you so much for your willingness to share your lifetime of experience to meet critical needs in your community. Both RSVP and the volunteer station where you serve share the responsibility of providing policies and procedures that will make your volunteer experience a positive and enjoyable one. This handbook addresses RSVP's policies and procedures as well as basic questions you might have about serving as an RSVP volunteer.

## **What is RSVP?**

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is a Senior Corps project of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). With more than 220,000 members, RSVP is one of the largest volunteer organizations for older adults in the nation. RSVP encourages its volunteers to bring a lifetime of experience to community projects and organizations needing volunteer talent. RSVP projects and volunteers serve nearly every county of the United States.

Since 1982, FiftyForward (formerly Senior Citizens Inc.) has hosted RSVP of Davidson and Williamson counties locally by providing a 50 percent match to the Corporation's grant.

## **Who can be an RSVP volunteer?**

Any person age 55 or older who lives in Davidson or Williamson County, or is willing to serve in Davidson or Williamson County, is eligible to join FiftyForward RSVP. There is no restriction based on education, income, or skills.

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

FiftyForward RSVP offers volunteer opportunities in 3 specific placements:

- ◆ Friends Learning in Pairs (FLIP) – an intergenerational tutoring program serving approximately 30 elementary schools in Davidson and Williamson counties
- ◆ FiftyForward Fresh/Meals on Wheels – a meal delivery program serving older adults who are no longer able to prepare food for themselves
- ◆ Dandridge Tower Partnership – volunteers who reside in this apartment community participate in RSVP coordinated volunteer projects serving local nonprofits

## **How do I become an RSVP volunteer?**

All volunteers who participate in the Friends Learning in Pairs (FLIP) program are automatically registered as RSVP volunteers. FLIP tutors must take part in an in-person interview, complete a background check and pre-placement training in order to participate in the program.

All volunteers age 55+ who serve at FiftyForward Fresh/Meals on Wheels are given the opportunity to register as RSVP volunteers.

Dandridge Tower residents who participate in official RSVP projects are registered as RSVP volunteers.

## **How do I report my volunteer hours?**

FLIP volunteers utilize sign-in sheets at their assigned school; Fresh/Meals on Wheels volunteers sign in with the Volunteer Coordinator and Dandridge Tower volunteer hours are recorded via a sign in sheet associated with each project.

## **What are the benefits of becoming an RSVP volunteer?**

- ◆ Free supplemental accident and liability insurance while volunteering
- ◆ Thorough orientation and quality volunteer placement
- ◆ Chance to use your experience and skills or learn something new
- ◆ Opportunity for community involvement
- ◆ Satisfaction of knowing you are making a difference
- ◆ RSVP recognition and celebration of your volunteer service
- ◆ RSVP volunteers are also eligible for the benefits provided by their volunteer stations.

## **What are an RSVP volunteer's responsibilities?**

- ◆ Attend all required orientation and training.
- ◆ Perform your duties to the best of your ability, ask questions, cooperate with staff and other volunteers, and follow the volunteer station's policies.
- ◆ Be dependable and follow through on commitments.
- ◆ Notify your station supervisor if you will be absent, late, or must leave early. If you will be away for an extended period of time, or if you choose to discontinue service, notify the station supervisor and the RSVP office in advance.
- ◆ Maintain the confidentiality of any information you receive about the volunteer station, its employees, or its clients.
- ◆ Make sure that any information you give out is correct. When in doubt, ask your supervisor for the correct information.
- ◆ Notify the station supervisor and the RSVP office of any problems you encounter during your assignment.
- ◆ Notify the RSVP office of any changes in your phone number, address, and ability to serve as a volunteer.
- ◆ Complete required paperwork and abide by the federal restrictions as described on registration form.

## **What are an RSVP volunteer's rights?**

- ◆ Receive training and guidance; be informed of the station's policies and any changes in your assignment.
- ◆ Have a suitable and worthwhile assignment; receive responses to your questions and concerns.
- ◆ Be treated with fairness and respect.
- ◆ Receive appreciation for your service.

## **What is the RSVP Advisory Council?**

The FiftyForward Program Resources Committee serves as the RSVP Advisory Council.

## **Can an RSVP volunteer be terminated?**

The following practices, though not all-inclusive, are grounds for termination of assignment:

- ◆ Violation of confidentiality
- ◆ Exploitation or disrespect clients, staff or other volunteers
- ◆ Noncompliance with job description; inability to fulfill the responsibilities of the volunteer assignment.
- ◆ Misrepresentation of volunteer role
- ◆ Continued absence without notice

## **Does RSVP have a grievance procedure?**

If you feel aggrieved by situation, an action or an RSVP staff decision, you may appeal for reconsideration by following these steps:

1. Discuss your complaint with the RSVP staff member responsible for the action.
2. If the issue is not resolved, put your complaint in writing and submit it to the RSVP Director, who will follow-up with you to address the complaint.
3. If the issue is still not resolved, you have the option of requesting a meeting to include the appropriate RSVP staff, RSVP Director and the Director of Active Aging.

4. Following thorough review of the written complaint and presentation of the grievance during a scheduled meeting you will be sent a written recommendation specifying the course of action to be taken and if merited, may include termination.

## **How do I contact RSVP staff?**

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