



AmeriCorps
Seniors



RSVP
Retired Senior Volunteer Program

Welcome to the Retired Senior Volunteer Program

We are excited that you have chosen to become a member of Cooper County RSVP. We hope the information in this handbook will answer all your questions about RSVP and will provide you with a better understanding of the program and its opportunities.

We encourage you to keep this as a reference book. If you have questions or need more information, however, please feel free to call the office. We look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

Tim R. Echternach
RSVP Program Manager

WELCOME

RSVP

Retired Senior Volunteer Program
345 W. Ashley Boonville, MO 65233



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Volunteer Handbook

RSVP

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

What Is RSVP?	Page 1
How does the program work?	1
Who is Eligible?	2
RSVP Sponsoring Agency	2
How is RSVP funded?	2
What is a volunteer station?	3
What is the RSVP Advisory Council?	3
History of RSVP	4
What are the benefits of being a volunteer?	5
Volunteer Hours	5
Volunteer Responsibilities	6
Volunteer Leave of Absence or Resignation	6
Volunteer Termination	6
Grievance Policy	7
What opportunities are available?	7
What will identify me as a volunteer?	8
Volunteer Guidelines	8
AmeriCorps Senior Pledge	9

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What is RSVP?

The AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP program pairs individuals aged 55 and older with organizations making change in Cooper County.

Volunteers who serve in our RSVP program choose how, where, and when they want to serve, with commitments ranging from a few hours to 40 hours per week. Volunteers become a solution to local, regional, and national challenges by supporting individuals and agencies in their neighborhoods.

RSVP volunteers learn new skills, make new friends and become more active in their communities. We also work to match volunteer qualifications (time, talent, and experience) with needs of area nonprofit and governmental organizations. AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers themselves report better health and longevity having served their community.



How does the program work?

Each potential RSVP volunteer meets with a member of the staff and completes an enrollment form and an interest inventory. Then the staff member visits with the individual about their interests and time available for volunteer assignments. The volunteer and staff review the opportunities that are available.

Based on the time commitment and the qualifications for the various volunteer positions, the volunteer decides which assignment they would like to pursue. After a volunteer chooses an activity of interest, a staff member will arrange for the volunteer to meet with the station supervisor from the agency. During the interview, the supervisor provides detailed information about the volunteer activity. The interview provides an opportunity for the volunteer to learn more about the assignment and for the supervisor to determine if the volunteer has the necessary qualifications for the position.



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Who is Eligible?

Anyone 55 and over can become a RSVP Volunteer! The only requirements for participation are:

- A willingness to be of service in the community without monetary compensation.
- A willingness to accept instruction and supervision as required.
- A willingness to be of service in the community without monetary compensation.
- A willingness to accept instruction and supervision as required.

RSVP Sponsoring Agency

Central Missouri Community Action is proud to become a sponsor for the new RSVP program in Cooper County. CMCA was awarded this grant in April of 2021. CMCA's mission statement is:

To empower individuals and families to achieve self-reliance.

Volunteers can help address areas where there are gaps in service in the Cooper County area.



How is RSVP funded?

The Cooper County RSVP is funded through an AmeriCorps Seniors grant, providing approximately 70% of the operational funds for the project. The other 30% comes from match dollars through Cooper County and Central Missouri Community Action.





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What is a volunteer station?

A volunteer station is any public or private non-profit organization, or health care organization where RSVP volunteers are assigned. To be an active volunteer station an organization must sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the RSVP program.

The MOU establishes working relationships, cooperation and communication between the volunteer station and RSVP. The MOU designates the person responsible for supervising volunteers and submitting any information RSVP might need for grant reporting and verification of volunteer hours. The volunteer station staff provides you with instruction and materials to accomplish your assignment.

What is the RSVP Advisory Council?

The purpose of the advisory council is to advise and assist the RSVP staff and sponsor, CMCA on issues related to the RSVP program.

The council provides support on matters related to volunteer recruitment, community relations, fundraising, evaluation and volunteer recognition. The advisory council consists of ten-fifteen members representing a cross section of RSVP volunteers and the community.





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History of RSVP

RSVP was launched in the spring of 1971 under the Administration on Aging (AOA). In July of the same year, RSVP was transferred from the AOA to the federal agency, ACTION, which had oversight of federal domestic volunteer programs. Eleven projects were started in the summer of 1971.

In 1993, the Corporation for National Service was established with the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 was signed. This new act lowered the age for participation in the RSVP program from 60 to 55 and eliminated a requirement that volunteers no longer be in the work force. RSVP became one of three existing volunteer programs for older adults to be administered by the Corporation under the banner of the “National Senior Corps”.

In 2020, Senior Corps was rebranded into AmeriCorps Seniors with over 270,000 volunteers contributing over 1.6 billion hours of service to their communities through a network of 40,000 local non-profit and community-based organizations.

RSVP now serves in more than 1,400 counties nationally. RSVP volunteers continue to make a difference in the lives of those they serve and their communities, while enriching their own lives through service.



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What are the benefits of being a volunteer?

- Volunteer recognition activities
- A monthly newsletter providing volunteer opportunities, volunteer recognition and other information related to volunteerism and retirement.
- Mileage reimbursement for volunteers using their own vehicle for volunteer activities.
- Personal Liability, accident and excess automobile liability insurance provided at no cost to the volunteer. (This is in addition to your own auto insurance)

Other possible benefits: improved moral and health, improved self-esteem, new skills, new friends and a greater awareness of community needs and resources!



Volunteer Hours

Each month, the RSVP staff must track how many volunteers participate in the program at their designated volunteer station and how many volunteer hours were contributed by each volunteer.

RSVP volunteer time sheets are important:

To document the type of work being done by volunteers.

To determine eligibility for volunteer recognition activities. Provide verification of potential mileage reimbursement. Mandatory grant reporting.

Community feedback of volunteer time, talent and commitment.



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Volunteer Responsibilities

Make sure that volunteer hours are submitted monthly by the specified deadline.

Contact the RSVP office if there is a change in address or phone number.

Let RSVP staff know if you are not well or will be away from an assignment for an extended period of time.

Contact staff if you are interested in a new or additional assignment.

Volunteer Leave of Absence or Resignation

A volunteer may choose to take a leave of absence or resign a particular assignment for any reason and is free to do so at any time. One to two weeks' notice to the volunteer station staff and the RSVP office is preferred, when possible so that a replacement can be arranged.

Volunteer Termination

The station supervisor should inform RSVP staff of any problems with assigned volunteers. The volunteer station may request removal of a volunteer or RSVP staff may remove a volunteer from a volunteer station. Any concerns by station staff, RSVP staff, or volunteer will be discussed and reviewed with the RSVP manager and Advisory Council. If the Volunteer does not agree with the decision they have the right to an appeal, by submitting a letter of infractions stated within two weeks of initial concern. The RSVP Manager and Advisory Council will have 30 days to finalize decision on volunteer status.



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Grievance Policy

The Cooper County RSVP program does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, including limited English proficiency, sex, sexual orientation, age, political affiliation, religion or based on disability. If you feel you have been discriminated against or have been dismissed without cause, you have the right to appeal to the Advisory Council for review.

What opportunities are available?

A wide variety of volunteer assignments are available at several local sites.

- Opportunities May Include:
Meal delivery to homebound persons Shopping for homebound persons Repackaging and distributing food at a pantry Senior Center assistant
- Teach/mentor students working on their GED Assist CMCA with financial literacy classes

All volunteer work must be done with a recognized station that has a signed Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with the RSVP program. An RSVP volunteer cannot take the place of a paid employee. RSVP volunteers are not placed in an assignment that involves politics or teaching religious doctrine.



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What will identify me as a volunteer?

All RSVP volunteers are encouraged to wear their RSVP name tags while on assignment. The name tags ensure that participants are recognized as volunteers and not paid staff members at the volunteer station.

In addition, when volunteers wear their name tags, they help create more visibility for the RSVP program in the community. Tee-shirts or other program wearable's may be distributed along with name tags.



Volunteer Guidelines

- Perform the duties to the best of their ability.
- Observe the days and hours agreed upon.
- Communicate with staff and other volunteers.
- If a problem arises speak with station staff or RSVP staff.
- Inform volunteer station and RSVP staff in advance if you need to be away or discontinue serving as a volunteer.
- Maintain the confidentiality of any information received while on assignment (not maintaining confidentiality can be grounds for termination)





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AmeriCorps Seniors Pledge

I will get things done for America – to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier.

When faced with a pressing challenge, I will bring Americans of all generations together to strengthen our communities.

When faced with children at risk, I will help them stay in school and on track for a brighter future.

When faced with older adults in need, I will provide support and compassion so they may age with grace and dignity.



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Working for the greatest good, I will use my lifetime of experiences to improve my country, my community, and myself through service.