
Volunteer Handbook

Columbus County RSVP

RSVP

Lead With Experience

Southeastern Community College
M-Building, Room 116
PO Box 151
Whiteville, NC 28472
910-642-7141 x 294
Melody.Prevatte@sccnc.edu

Dear RSVP Volunteer:

Welcome to the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) family!

We are pleased that you have decided to serve Columbus County with your time and talents through volunteerism. Our goal in preparing this handbook is to answer many of the most frequently asked questions about the program and its benefits to you. If you have further questions after reading the handbook, call the RSVP office. Please keep this handbook for future reference.

If you have any ideas or suggestions to help us improve our program, call or stop by the office. We publish a bi-monthly newsletter and are always looking for newsworthy articles. We especially want to report your "success stories!"

Thank you for joining RSVP and for helping to make Columbus County a great place in which to live.

Sincerely your RSVP Staff,
Dr. Melody Prevatte, Director
Ms. Elizabeth Chase, Recruiter
Mrs. Sue Bell, Project Assistant



PURPOSE

The purpose of the Columbus County RSVP is to provide volunteers with a variety of service opportunities in various public and nonprofit agencies. Our county has a tremendous resource in its more experienced citizens. In a time of diminishing financial resources and escalating human needs, many agencies must turn to its citizens for volunteer support. RSVP provides the link that matches your skills to those community needs.

HISTORY

RSVP is an outgrowth of efforts by private groups, gerontologists, and government agencies over the past four decades to address the needs of retired persons in America. Because of these efforts, RSVP was created nationally in 1969 and launched in the spring of 1971 with an appropriation of \$500,000. The initial success of RSVP caused Congress to increase the funding to \$15,000,000 in 1972. RSVP has served Columbus County since 1973. Columbus County has one of the 17 programs in North Carolina.

FUNDING

RSVP is funded by the Corporation for National & Community Service, Southeastern Community College, and the Columbus County Administration. Additional local sources of support have been cash contributions by businesses and individuals, donated services and supplies, and provision of meals.

ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT

Any person 55 years of age or older, employed or retired, and willing to volunteer on a regular basis, is eligible for membership in RSVP. There are no restrictions based on education, income, or experience. There is no minimum number of hours per week required.

At the time of enrollment, a staff member will interview new volunteers to establish their interests, hobbies and background and suggest assignments in keeping with these interests. New volunteers may also visit several potential stations before accepting an assignment.

VOLUNTEER BENEFITS

I. INSURANCE

All volunteers enrolled in RSVP are automatically covered by insurance while participating in community service at their RSVP volunteer site. There is no charge for this coverage. A brief description follows:

✓***Accident Insurance*** - This covers you, the volunteer, for a personal injury arising from volunteer activities. The insurance applies while you are traveling directly to and from and participating in an activity sponsored by RSVP. Any accident occurring while you perform errands (shopping, banking, etc.) on your way to or from your volunteer station would not be covered. If you are enrolled in Medicare, this benefit applies only to expenses incurred in excess of the benefits provided under Medicare.

✓***Personal Liability*** - This coverage protects you from a bodily injury or property damage liability claim arising out of program-related volunteer activities.

✓***Excess Automobile Liability*** - This coverage protects you for a bodily injury or property damage arising out of using your own automobile in connection with your program-related volunteer activities. This insurance is in excess of the insurance you carry on your own automobile or the limits of the state's financial responsibility law. This insurance does not replace your personal automobile policy required by North Carolina law.

If you have any questions about specific details of this insurance plan, call the RSVP office.

II. RECOGNITION

RSVP strives throughout the year to recognize and show appreciation to its volunteers. All active RSVP volunteers and volunteer site managers are invited to the Volunteer Appreciation Celebrations as guests of RSVP. Parties include a meal, gift, award presentation, and entertainment. Celebrations are held in the spring and winter of each year.

III. REIMBURSEMENT

Recording your volunteer hours allows RSVP volunteers to remain an active part of Columbus County! Every effort is made to keep paperwork to a minimum. We emphasize the importance of your volunteer time sheet. This is the only method we have of measuring your service to the community. The recording of volunteer hours also activates your insurance coverage.

Many seniors living on a fixed income find it a financial hardship to volunteer, as it requires some out-of-pocket expenditure for gas. In these cases, RSVP may reimburse volunteers for some of these expenses, within certain limits, as determined by the program budget.

For volunteers who do not claim reimbursement, proper completion of this form can be valuable to you in preparing your income tax. Mileage in connection with volunteer work IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE. The RSVP Staff will be glad to provide this information at the end of the year to volunteers who request it.

W-2 forms and other similar forms are not used to report a person's travel reimbursement. Under Section 418 of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act, stipends and reimbursements for out-of-pocket expenses made to RSVP volunteers are not treated as wages, and are not subject to any tax or charge.

Included in this handbook is a correctly completed volunteer time sheet. It must be turned in no later than the 10th of the following month to receive reimbursement. Reimbursement checks cannot be issued unless the volunteer and a staff member of the volunteer station sign this form.

RESPONSIBILITY OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are expected to report to their assignments on a regular basis and perform their duties under the

supervision of the volunteer station staff. If you are unable to be at your volunteer station, please let your supervisor or the RSVP office know as soon as possible.

It is also important to maintain confidentiality and protect the rights of those you are serving. After performing volunteer service, do not go into the community and talk about specific people.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

I. VOLUNTEER MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

✓Request for reimbursement must be made on a monthly timesheet. This timesheet must be signed by the volunteer and the volunteer station supervisor.

✓Time sheets must be received by the RSVP office no later than the 10th of the month for reimbursement at the end of the month. Reimbursement requests received after the 10th of the month will be held over to the next month.

✓Reimbursement requests submitted 3 months past due will not be honored.

✓Reimbursement is for the round trip from the volunteer's home to the volunteer site, using the most direct route. If the volunteer's work site requests that the volunteer drive additional miles that are non-essential (to run errands, pick up office supplies, go to the post office, etc.), they will not be reimbursed for those miles.

✓Reimbursement may not be available to those who are engaged with home meal delivery (this is available through the Department of Aging).

- ✓ Reimbursement is not available to those engaged in friendly visits to the homebound.
- ✓ Volunteers taking the frail elderly to doctor's appointments must provide documentation from the attending physician's office.
- ✓ If you are carpooling with other RSVP volunteers, only the driver can request reimbursement.
- ✓ Multiple reimbursement payments for miles traveled during a volunteer activity will not be made to volunteers. For example, if a volunteer is reimbursed or paid mileage by the Department of Aging, RSVP will not also reimburse the volunteer.
- ✓ Volunteers who drive must have a valid driver's license and keep in effect automobile liability insurance equal to the minimum required by the State of North Carolina.
- ✓ RSVP will reimburse volunteers at the rate of 30 cents per mile for a maximum of \$60 each month. Checks are issued monthly, in accordance with SCC procedures, and are mailed to the volunteer's home address.
- ✓ RSVP will not process requests during any one month under \$10. All requests under \$10 will be held over until the volunteer's requests exceed this amount.
- ✓ It is the goal of the SCC business office to have mileage reimbursement checks distributed at the end of each month. There is no guarantee of checks reaching the volunteer on a particular day of the month.
- ✓ RSVP staff may intermittently verify a volunteer's mileage reimbursement request through the use of volunteer station managers, electronic formats, and/or traveling the route.

II. VOLUNTEER HOURS REPORTING

Reporting your volunteer time is extremely important to the RSVP program. Timesheets and postage-paid envelopes will be given to you. Record all volunteer activities on your timesheet.

Some examples of volunteer activities to record on your timesheet:

- Visiting shut-in
- Cooking and delivering a meal to a bereaved family
- Calling to check on a senior citizen
- Any hours spent as a result of RSVP staff calling and asking you to volunteer

Some examples of volunteer activities NOT to record on your timesheet:

- Studying for Sunday School class
- Singing in the church choir
- Babysitting grandchildren
- Caring for a parent or close blood relative

Volunteer timesheets will be accepted in the following formats:

- Hard copy time sheet (as provided by the RSVP office)
- Hard copy or electronic group sign-in sheet
- E-mail sent by volunteer supervisor or volunteer. Time reported via e-mail by volunteer or volunteer station must use e-mail identifiable by RSVP director.
- Telephone report by volunteer supervisor or volunteer with written confirmation
- Facsimile

III. ELECTORAL POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND THE USE OF RSVP VOLUNTEERS

Federal law requires that Columbus County RSVP staff, advisory council members, and volunteers not participate or intervene in any political campaign for public office.

Every volunteer has a right to participate or not, as he or she sees fit, in the election process. However, as a program, Columbus County RSVP shall be free of partisanship in its governance and conduct. The program shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign for public office. No member of the program staff shall speak or act in the name of the program in a political campaign. Those who, in their official capacity, speak for the program should make it clear when expressing individual views that they are not stating a program position.

Some examples of activities in which RSVP Volunteers cannot report volunteer time:

- Voter registration
- Electoral activities
- Voter transportation to polls
- Efforts to influence legislation

IV. OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO KNOW

✓Volunteers do not 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.

✓SCC employees, RSVP staff, nor any volunteer station managers will request or receive compensation from the beneficiaries of RSVP volunteers.

- ✓Financial support from a volunteer station is not a precondition for a station to obtain volunteer service.
- ✓SCC will withdraw services if a volunteer stations' inability to provide monetary or in-kind support to the project under the Memorandum of Understanding diminishes or jeopardizes the project's financial capabilities to fulfill its obligation.
- ✓RSVP volunteers do not receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardian, or members of their family and friends.
- ✓RSVP funds are not used to finance labor or anti-labor organizations or related activity.
- ✓RSVP staff or volunteers do not give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in proselytization as part of their duties.

WHY SHOULD YOU VOLUNTEER? THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF REASONS!

...90% of the students tutored demonstrated increased academic skills and grade promotion.

...an average of 36 blood donors at each drive were served efficiently, thereby encouraging continued support. A total of 896 units of blood were collected in one year. This will save thousands of lives!

...1,150 nursing home residents had someone spend time with them. During the singing hour, residents were observed smiling, singing, moving a hand or a foot, and visiting with the volunteers.

...1,796 senior citizens improved their diet through the noon meal program. This service assisted these individuals to be able to remain living in their own homes.

...125 families and emergency professionals were able to safely enter homes due to the installation of a ramp and handicap rails inside their homes. Due to the generosity of others (donations of materials & cash), more ramps were able to be built than anticipated.

...opportunities for adoptable pets were increased through the rescue of 167 pets. Each of these animals were provided medical evaluation. Due to your help in donations and fundraising, 395 pets were spayed or neutered. This service provides a valuable public safety service.

...9,700 hours were spent visiting with homebound and/or sick senior citizens. Your visits brought much needed socialization and comfort.

...9,360 meals were delivered to senior citizens by the home delivered meal program. Because of you and this program, only two individuals had to leave their home.

...2,602 county residents in a crisis received food and clothing.

MISCELLANEOUS

☺ Volunteers are our best recruiters and we want you to invite your friends to join our group.

☺ Please wear your nametag so you can be identified as a RSVP volunteer. Call if you need a new nametag.

☺ From time to time the RSVP staff calls on its volunteers for special projects, one-time and short-term in nature. Please let the RSVP staff know of your interest in these kinds of projects.

☺ If your volunteer job is not providing the challenges or rewards you anticipated, please discuss the matter with a RSVP staff member. Our goal has always been to permit you to do WHAT YOU want to do, WHEN YOU want to do it, and WHERE YOU want to do it.

☺ All RSVP volunteers are eligible to serve on the RSVP Advisory Council. Call the office and let us know if you are interested.

☺ Travel expenses related to your volunteer service are tax deductible. Keep accurate records of miles traveled during volunteer activities and consult with a tax preparer. Upon request, RSVP will keep mileage information for you each year.

☺ A volunteer will be considered withdrawn (inactive) from RSVP after 90 consecutive days of unreported volunteer hours. Inactive volunteers are not permitted to participate in RSVP activities such as banquets, trips, etc.

Thank you RSVP supporters!

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** 

