



**AmeriCorps  
Seniors**

# AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP

## Volunteer Handbook



12900 Middlebrook Road #1600

Germantown, MD 20874

240-777-2610

[www.montgomeryserves.org](http://www.montgomeryserves.org)

## Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

RSVP is one of three branches of AmeriCorps Seniors which is part of AmeriCorps. The two other branches are Foster Grandparents Program and Senior Companions Program.

RSVP does not have income requirements and does not pay a stipend to its volunteers. Information about all of AmeriCorps programs is available at [www.americorps.gov](http://www.americorps.gov).

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program was established in 1971 to help local communities by encouraging people aged 55 and over to volunteer. RSVP membership has no restrictions based on income, education, experience, race, gender, or physical disabilities. Through volunteer coordination, RSVP enables Seniors to lead active lives in the community service of their choice.

Continued activity during the senior years has been medically proven to affect health in a positive way. RSVP gives the opportunity for Seniors to enrich their lives by offering volunteer placements that enable new and existing skills and interests to be used in the community. Through RSVP, public awareness is increased about the vast resources of knowledge, experience, and skills that seniors have to offer.

AmeriCorps oversees the administration of RSVP grants. The national office is based in Washington, D.C. The sponsor agencies are legally responsible for all programs and financial aspects of the RSVP.

RSVP of Montgomery County is sponsored by the Montgomery County Government and housed in the County's Volunteer Center.

## Joining RSVP

Anyone 55 years or over may become an RSVP Volunteer. There are no other restrictions for joining. By becoming a volunteer in the RSVP, you have an opportunity to donate your time, enthusiasm, talents, and expertise to the community and make an impact on the lives of those who need help the most. There are no fees required to join the RSVP.

Interested seniors may contact the RSVP office which is located at the Montgomery County Volunteer Center, 12900 Middlebrook Road #1600, Germantown, MD 20874.

The AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Program Manager and RSVP volunteers at the Volunteer Center are available to answer questions, and discuss volunteer interests and specific needs for RSVP volunteers within the community. Registration is through a secure form and portal at <https://www.volgistics.com/appform/1856146453>. All information is secured and confidential.

The Volunteer Center also has a resource-rich searchable database for volunteer opportunities: [www.montgomeryserves.org](http://www.montgomeryserves.org)

## Volunteer Placement

Volunteers will be matched with volunteer stations according to their interests, abilities, preferences, and availability. Volunteers are placed in one or more of approximately 3 volunteer stations that have agreed to assign and supervise RSVP Volunteers. Volunteers choose a station where they will feel comfortable and can use their abilities advantageously.

Currently, over 200 RSVP volunteers serve locally at the public and private nonprofit organizations/programs listed below.

Asterisk (\*) denotes Montgomery County Government Agency/Program.

### **Bone Builders\***

Classes throughout Montgomery County

240-773-8290

Alison Boynton

[Alison.Boynton@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov](mailto:Alison.Boynton@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov)

[www.montgomeryserves.org/rsvp-bone-builders](http://www.montgomeryserves.org/rsvp-bone-builders)

### **Montgomery County Volunteer Center\***

Germantown, MD 20874

240-777-2600

Faith McNeill

[volunteer@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:volunteer@montgomerycountymd.gov)

[www.montgomeryserves.org](http://www.montgomeryserves.org)

### **AARP Tax-Aide Program**

Locations throughout Montgomery County

Dave Gill

[montgomerytaxaide@gmail.com](mailto:montgomerytaxaide@gmail.com)

[www.montgomeryserves.org/tax-aide](http://www.montgomeryserves.org/tax-aide)

## RSVP Volunteer Hours

### **Reporting Hours**

Montgomery County RSVP sends reports to the AmeriCorps Seniors national office annually which include the number of volunteers, total number of hours the volunteers served, and the number of volunteer stations. These reports are a record of what is happening with volunteers in Montgomery County, MD. They indicate where the individual is volunteering and what stations are being helped. Most of all, the hours prove our community is a caring one that gives its time freely and willingly to help others.

### **What Hours Count?**

All hours count that are volunteered at a registered volunteer station with the exception of hours spent commuting to/from volunteering unless that time is part of the volunteer commitment (for example, driving seniors to medical appointments). Other exclusions are time spent promoting religious instruction, conducting worship services, as well as working for any political party or individual running for political office.

## RSVP Time Keeping Policy

### **General**

The general rule for reporting time requires the volunteer station supervisor at every station to submit a report of hours by RSVP volunteer to the RSVP Program Manager regularly through the specific method below. Timekeeping procedures vary depending on program participation due to other reporting needs. Volunteers should follow the instructions for their specific volunteer program when reporting hours.

### **AARP Tax-Aide**

Tax-Aide volunteers are responsible for tracking their time and reporting it via the VicNet online portal. Hours should be reported either weekly, monthly, or at the end of the tax season. The VicNet portal can be accessed here:

<https://www.volgistics.com/vicnet/603343/login>

Upon submission of hours, by clicking "Post," volunteers agree to the following statement: "I confirm that the information provided accurately represents my volunteer hours with the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Program."

Hours are reviewed/audited by the RSVP Program Manager for accuracy. If questions arise, the District Coordinator of AARP Tax-Aide Montgomery County is responsible for verifying the accuracy of volunteer hours.

### **Bone Builders**

Bone Builders hours are submitted monthly in an online form overseen and verified by the volunteer station supervisor. Monthly, all hours are entered into Volgistics.

Upon submission of hours, volunteers agree to the following statement: "I confirm that the information provided accurately represents my volunteer hours with the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Program."

Volunteers can access the portal to review their hours by logging into VicNet:  
<https://www.volgistics.com/vicnet/603343/login>

### **Montgomery County Volunteer Center**

MCVC volunteers are responsible for tracking their time and reporting it via the VicNet online portal. Hours should be reported either weekly or monthly. The VicNet portal can be accessed here: <https://www.volgistics.com/vicnet/603343/login>

Upon submission of hours, by clicking "Post," volunteers agree to the following statement: "I confirm that the information provided accurately represents my volunteer hours with the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Program."

Hours are reviewed/audited by the RSVP Program Manager for accuracy. If questions arise, the Volunteer Center Manager is responsible for verifying the accuracy of volunteer hours.

## Teleservice Policy

Since the onset of COVID, teleservice has increased in popularity. At first a requirement for almost any safe volunteerism to occur, many programs have found that adaptations to volunteers performing certain types of tasks from home or electronically is a benefit to the program, clients, and volunteers.

The Role of each party involved in teleservice is as follows:

### AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP of Montgomery County:

- Ensure clear guidelines are established with volunteer stations
- Ensure specific teleservice roles are outlined and approved
- Communicate with AmeriCorps portfolio manager to ensure teleservice policy is in compliance with AmeriCorps guidelines

### Volunteer Stations:

- Communicate changes in volunteer roles and needs as related to teleservice
- Communicate any concerns about teleservice or specific volunteers
- Verify volunteer hours are accurate
- Periodically check to ensure remote volunteers are reporting to their assignments according to schedule

### Volunteer

- Accurately report volunteer hours
- Report as scheduled to teleservice assignments
- Communicate challenges or concerns with Volunteer Station immediately

## Teleservice Eligibility

A volunteer assignment is eligible for teleservice if the following criteria are met:

1. A role description is outlined and agreed upon by AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP of Montgomery County and the volunteer station
2. The role can be monitored using drop in verification and/or trackable computer equipment. Example: volunteers are performing service via a Zoom link shared with the station site supervisor, or volunteers are performing service using Montgomery County-issued equipment, with usage tracking enabled.
3. Any questions about volunteer hours claimed can be verified by the volunteer station.

## Mitigation of Time & Attendance Abuse

1. Volunteer hours should be reported as outlined by volunteer station in the timekeeping policy.
2. Volunteer station supervisors to plan regular unannounced check-ins to ensure volunteer has reported to duties as scheduled.
3. An estimate of anticipated hours performed should be established and any volunteer hours reporting should be compared for accuracy to prevent abuse of time reporting.



# RSVP Volunteer Benefits

## **Volunteer Insurance**

A free supplemental insurance policy covers all registered volunteers while they are on a volunteer assignment. This is a requirement of the National Corporation and a benefit to RSVP Volunteers.

**Accident insurance** covers RSVP Volunteers for personal injuries suffered during volunteer assignment. The policy is intended to reimburse the cost of medical treatment, hospitalization and licensed nursing care required as a result of an accident. The limit is \$25,000 per accident.

**Personal liability insurance** provides protection for volunteers against injury or property damage claims arising out of volunteer service. The policy liability is \$1,000,000.

**Excess automobile liability insurance** is provided only for those volunteers who drive as part of their volunteer assignment. The liability policy limits are \$500,000. The liability insurance is for the protection of the volunteer in the event a volunteer is sued for causing physical injury to another person or damage to another's property. It does not cover damage to the volunteer's automobile.

**Accidental death and dismemberment** benefits of \$2,500 will be paid to the volunteer's beneficiary in the event of accidental death while volunteering. Benefits of \$2,500 will be paid to the volunteer in the event of loss of both hands, feet, or eyes, and any combination of the above while volunteering.

Additionally, RSVP volunteers are recognized for their commitment through a variety of ways, e.g. newsletter articles, nominations for volunteer awards, and volunteer appreciation events.

# AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP of Montgomery County, MD

## Volunteer Information



**AmeriCorps  
Seniors**

Welcome to AmeriCorps Seniors Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). RSVP is a Federal grant program through AmeriCorps connecting older adults age 55+ with volunteer opportunities to meet community needs.

### RSVP Volunteer Code of Ethics

Volunteers are expected to respect the policies of the volunteer station and perform their assignments in a business-like manner. The business of volunteer stations and their clients should be treated as confidential.

### Volunteer Responsibilities

- Report all incidents regarding personal injury to your station supervisor and RSVP promptly.
- Notify the volunteer station if you will not be available during your assigned shift.
- Remember to “sign in” or otherwise document your volunteer hours when you volunteer so that your time is recorded.
- Notify the RSVP office of changes in your mailing address, telephone number, e-mail address, life insurance beneficiary or volunteer assignment.

### Non-Discrimination

If you feel that you have been subject to discriminatory practices, you have the right to file a written complaint with the RSVP Program Manager within 180 days following an alleged discrimination. Your identity shall be kept confidential to the extent possible to investigate the complaint and take corrective action if necessary.

### Americans with Disabilities

With respect to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), we will consider reasonable accommodations when requested. All RSVP stations are required to complete a survey to determine their accessibility. Please ask your RSVP Coordinator to identify the level of accessibility of a station if required.

### Volunteer Separation and Appeal Process

Though it rarely occurs, RSVP may separate a volunteer for causes including, but not limited to, extensive or unauthorized absences, misconduct, or inability to perform assignments or accept supervision. If the volunteer wishes to appeal the separation, a written appeal may be submitted to the Montgomery County Volunteer Center Manager for review; the volunteer will be notified of the decision within thirty days of receiving the request for appeal.

## What Legal Limitations Apply to the Operation of the RSVP Program?

[45 CFR §2553.91](#)

### *RSVP Volunteers and Political Activities*

Federal guidelines mandate that RSVP volunteers shall not act in any way which results in RSVP being identified with political activities. Specifically, volunteers do not engage in, and grantee funds are not used for, any of the following activities, to the extent they are prohibited in the applicable program regulations: electoral activities, voter registration, voter transportation to polls, and efforts to influence legislation.

RSVP grant funds are not used to finance labor or anti-labor organizations or related activity.

### *RVSP Volunteers and Religious Activities*

RSVP volunteers do not give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in proselytization as part of their duties and, if the sponsor is an organization that conducts inherently religious activities, those activities are offered separately, in time and location, from the programs or services funded under the Corporation grant.

### *RSVP Volunteers Cannot Engage in Activities that would Otherwise be Performed by Employed Workers*

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.

### *RSVP Volunteers and Compensation*

Volunteer does not receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardian, or members of their family, or friends.

Neither the grantee nor any volunteer station requests or receives compensation from the beneficiaries of RSVP volunteers.

Any volunteer station financial support of the RSVP Program is not a precondition for that station to obtain volunteer service.

### **RSVP of Montgomery County, MD**

RSVP Phone: 240-777-2612

RSVP Email: [lindsay.luhn@montgomerycountmd.gov](mailto:lindsay.luhn@montgomerycountmd.gov)

Volunteer Center Email: [volunteer@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:volunteer@montgomerycountymd.gov)

## Inactive Status and Separation

A volunteer who has not actively served as an RSVP Volunteer for a year will automatically be on inactive status. When the volunteer is ready to return, a call to the office or reporting new hours will reactivate the volunteer. Enrollment records are maintained to simplify activation.

Volunteers planning to be out of town for an extended period of time, or just taking some time off, are asked to let the RSVP office know as soon as possible. Also, please inform the volunteer station of the temporary absence.

### **Other reasons for separation include:**

#### **Reduction in workforce at the volunteer station:**

When separation of a volunteer is required because of a reduction in work force, every effort shall be made to transfer the volunteer to another suitable assignment.

#### **Unsatisfactory Performance:**

Imposed by the volunteer station for not meeting the agreed performance standards, a failure to complete assigned tasks, misconduct, repeated failure to report for assignments, etc. Prior to separation of a volunteer for unsatisfactory performance, the volunteer station supervisor and/or the RSVP Manager must make a reasonable effort to resolve the problem.

#### **Cause:**

Imposed by the volunteer station for gross misconduct, breach of responsibility, wrongful appropriation for personal use of goods or materials owned by the volunteer station, conviction of a crime, or insubordination. Separation for cause requires no notice.