



Volunteer

HANDBOOK

Welcome Volunteers! We are excited for you to join the Helpline Center's Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), you're joining an organization that promotes, tracks, and recognizes the contributions of volunteers age 55 and older across the United States. Through your efforts, the quality of life in your community is improved and you are graced by helping others. RSVP and your local community agencies value the wisdom and experience you've gained over your lifetime and want you to be able to put that knowledge to use throughout your volunteer work. This handbook includes basic program information and procedures regarding RSVP. Your volunteer experience through RSVP promises to be enjoyable and rewarding.

Thank you for answering the call to serve your community!

The RSVP program is affiliated with the following agencies.



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**WE BELIEVE IN
MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

RSVP: An Invitation to Serve

RSVP is an organization for individuals age 55 and older who are serving their community by volunteering. RSVP is a coordinating agency that supports non-profit and government agencies and proprietary health care facilities through placement of volunteers. These agencies universally report that the scope and effectiveness of their work is enhanced through volunteers at their organization. The RSVP Program identifies and responds to the changing needs of the community, using proven approaches and local volunteers to meet challenges and improve community life. RSVP proves what researchers have been saying for years, that the key to aging is to stay active, both physically and mentally and volunteer work does just that.

Sponsorship

RSVP provides opportunities to volunteer within Lincoln, Minnehaha, Turner, and Union counties in southeast South Dakota, and is sponsored by The Helpline Center. These counties were served by other sponsors in their first forty years of the RSVP program in South Dakota. The Helpline Center assumed sponsorship in 2015 in order to continue the service and contributions of RSVP to community life in South Dakota.

Mission Statement: *The Helpline Center strives in making lives better by giving support, offering hope and creating connections all day, every day.*

We fulfill our mission through the following core service areas:

- 211 Helpline – Informational Call Center
- Volunteer Connections
- Suicide & Crisis Support & Prevention

Corporation for National and Community Service

The federal agency which funds and regulates RSVP is the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). CNCS's major service programs are AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps VISTA, and Senior Corps. The Senior Corps division consists of the RSVP Program, Senior Companion Program, and the Foster Grandparent Program. The U.S. Congress created the RSVP Program in 1969. The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, passed by Congress and signed into law by the President in 2009, set new requirements and made some other changes to the program. Federal funding for RSVP is provided by the amount set by Congress each year. In order to receive federal funding, sponsors are required to show local support in the form of matching funds. The Helpline Center RSVP Program relies on support from local United Ways, and our city and county governments, to provide the required matching funds. More information about CNCS can be found at <https://www.nationalservice.gov/>.



Helpline Center RSVP Advisory Committee

The committee is made up of at least 4 members of the communities served by Helpline RSVP and includes volunteers, station representatives and other individuals with particular knowledge of the social needs of the area. The Advisory Committee's role is to periodically assess the workings of the program, offer advice to the staff, help with special events and help promote, publicize and advocate for Helpline RSVP in the communities served. Persons interested in serving on the Advisory Council should share that interest with the RSVP Coordinator. The Advisory Council will meet a minimum of 3 times per fiscal year – beginning in July each year.

Equal Opportunity Policy

Helpline RSVP is an equal opportunity agency. Enrollment of volunteers into the program is done without regard to race, color, gender, sexual orientation, creed, belief, religion, age, national origin, mental or physical handicap, political affiliation, or past participation in the discrimination complaint process. RSVP strives to be supportive of the needs of each RSVP member and will work with volunteer stations to make reasonable accommodations for all volunteers. For assistance or more information contact RSVP at 605-274-1420.

RSVP Focus Areas

The RSVP Program strives to meet the needs of our four main priorities in the Sioux Empire area, to which each RSVP program across the country must assign focus areas (those areas with the greatest need in their community) & allocate the majority of their service hours to.

The Helpline Center RSVP focus areas are:

1. *Education (Tutoring/Mentoring Youth)*
2. *Economic Needs (food pantry, food bank distribution & packing meals)*
3. *Nutrition Delivery (Meals on Wheels, and other food delivery programs)*
4. *Transportation (rides for elderly & disabled citizens to appointments, church, volunteer work, free rides provided to volunteers to their volunteer locations, etc.)*

Because each area of the country has distinct needs and opportunities, a percentage of each RSVP program can be dedicated to additional local and community concerns that do not fall under these categories (For Example - Volunteer work done at hospitals, disaster response, animal shelters, homeless shelters. etc.)



Who Can Volunteer?

Volunteer eligibility and enrollment in RSVP is open to anyone 55 years or older. Each volunteer chooses the days, times, and frequency of his or her service in coordination with the organization they volunteer with.

To be enrolled as an RSVP volunteer, an individual must:

1. Complete and sign the Helpline Center RSVP enrollment form.
2. Produce a government-issued ID as proof of age.
3. Undergo a background check through the National Sex Offender Public Website.
4. Participate in any orientation with the RSVP staff and complete all necessary paperwork.
5. Complete all necessary orientation, background checks, training and paperwork required by the program/organization volunteering with.



Volunteer Stations

The locations (organizations, businesses) that RSVP volunteers work in and help at are called “stations”. These stations will have a signed agreement with The Helpline Center RSVP program for partnership with volunteers and reporting volunteer hours. These agencies, or volunteer stations, are community non-profit organizations that accept responsibility for assignment and supervision of RSVP volunteers. Stations are to provide the training, education, paperwork and materials necessary for a successful volunteer opportunity to each volunteer.

Each volunteer station must be licensed or otherwise certified, when required, by the appropriate federal, state or local government. Non-profit agencies should be in good standing with the South Dakota Secretary of State.

The Helpline RSVP cannot place volunteers in private homes; however, Helpline RSVP volunteers may perform service to directly benefit the homebound under the umbrellas of an active RSVP station, provided that station is in compliance with state and local laws regarding such placement.

When possible, if volunteers have a specific preference for placement, that opportunity will be pursued first. Federal regulations have mandated that the majority of volunteers serve in areas that address critical national needs, and priority will be given to placing RSVP volunteers in stations that address those critical areas.

The list of volunteer stations who partner with the Helpline RSVP is always growing. RSVP welcomes suggestions for additional volunteer stations and will engage in conversation with

sites that are suggested. Stations are approved for inclusion within the RSVP program based on program goals, funding guidelines and community needs, which do change from time to time.

Volunteer Jobs

Volunteer jobs are simply what task is completed by volunteers at a volunteer station. A station may offer multiple or different volunteer opportunities, or jobs, that address different community needs. RSVP volunteers are not limited to one job at a station or to one station. However, volunteers are asked to log their hours separately for each of the jobs they undertake; as a general rule, if there would be a separate job description for what is being done, it is a different job. Volunteer hours may get reported to separate grant categories based on their job and community needs met.

Getting Started

Once a volunteer has completed the RSVP registration and background check, RSVP staff will begin to seek volunteer placements.

- A volunteer's skills, interests and background will always be put into consideration when placing a volunteer with a volunteer station.
- The volunteer always reserves the right to refuse any placement opportunity.
- Helpline RSVP simply offers each volunteer a selection of volunteer opportunities to choose from and helps guide the volunteer to find a good fit at an organization.
- A volunteer placement must always be made to an agency or organization who is a registered as a volunteer station to be included in the RSVP program.
- While some volunteers prefer contacting stations on their own, RSVP staff is happy to make introductions. This ensures the station is aware that the volunteer is a member of RSVP and the hours get reported accordingly.
- Once a referral is made by Helpline RSVP, it is the responsibility of the station and the volunteer to record and report all volunteer hours to the RSVP Office.
- Each Station takes the responsibility of orienting, training and supervising the volunteer.

Scheduling with Stations

- Assignment hours vary according to the needs of the stations.
- Volunteers need to be open and honest about their abilities and availability.
- Stations do what they can to accommodate volunteer scheduling requests, however, they do need to be able to rely on their volunteers.
- Volunteers should always be upfront about limitations and scheduling conflicts to help the Station create a reasonable and enjoyable schedule.



Feeding South Dakota is a popular Volunteer Station for RSVP work.

Some stations will request additional volunteers to help with activities or special events that require a short term or even one-time commitment. Please indicate your willingness to be on the one-time volunteer list if the need arises for additional volunteer recruitment to the RSVP Coordinator. Typically, these types of volunteer opportunities are sent via email &/or listed in our monthly RSVP Newsletter.

Volunteer Guidelines

Attendance: Volunteer stations and the people they serve depend on you. When illness or if an emergency arises, please notify your volunteer station supervisor. If other obligations will keep you away, please talk to your station supervisor in advance.

Background Checks: Because volunteering almost always puts people together, it is the policy of the Helpline Center to conduct name checks through the National Sex Offender Public Website prior to enrolling a volunteer. Some stations, due to the nature of their volunteer opportunities, will require a more thorough background check, in compliance with their own organizational policies. The Helpline Center RSVP program will provide reimbursement of any fees associated with completing a volunteer background check when necessary &/or the station can not financially cover the volunteers background check costs. Volunteers can submit the RSVP Background Check Reimbursement Form if reimbursement costs are needed to be covered for the volunteer. The Background Check Reimbursement form can be found on page 16 of this manual or via the RSVP Website – www.helplinecenter.org.



Communication: Please keep an open line of communication with your volunteer station and RSVP Coordinator at all times. If anything changes in your life (address, health status, availability to volunteer, etc.) please let both your station and the RSVP program know. We want to be sure that your volunteer experience is a satisfactory one for all parties. You can always call or email your RSVP Coordinator with any questions or concerns by calling 211 or email rsvp@helplinecenter.org.

Compensation: Under no circumstances can a volunteer accept a fee for service from service recipients, the legal guardians, members of their family, or friends.

- **Incentives, Gifts & Thank You's:** Volunteers may occasionally receive a thank you, incentive for turning in volunteer hours or gift of appreciation. These items are acceptable for an organization to give as a token of appreciation & should NOT be considered compensation or payment for the volunteer's time worked. NOR should any gift of money ever be given.

Confidentiality: There is always a possibility that some of the things that you hear, situations you observe and/or information about people that you meet would be best kept confidential. Please use discretion and good judgment when sharing about your volunteer experiences. Problems or concerns about those with whom you work should be addressed with your station supervisor. It is important never to share names, contact information or other identifying information about the people you serve to anyone other than the volunteer station and/or

Helpline RSVP staff. It is equally important that you protect your own personal information when volunteering.

Drug and Alcohol Use: The use of illegal drugs or alcohol, or being under the influence of, while performing hours of service is strictly prohibited and is grounds for separation from the RSVP program. If the legal use of prescribed drugs begins to impair your ability to perform your volunteer tasks safely, please tell your station supervisor. Your wellbeing is of utmost importance.

Expectations: Please perform volunteer duties to the best of your ability, observe the scheduled days and hours agreed upon, cooperate with staff and other volunteers, and follow the policies and procedures set forth by the volunteer station.

Leaves of Absence: If you are planning a vacation or to leave the area for an extended length of time, please let both your volunteer station and the RSVP office know. Some stations, due to the nature of the service they provide, are not equipped to accommodate extended leaves, so if this is part of your annual plans, please discuss with the volunteer station supervisor when signing on to the station.

Nepotism: Volunteers may not be assigned to or report directly to an organization's staff or directors if related by blood or marriage to them, sponsor staff or officers, or members of the sponsor Board of Directors, or Advisory Committee, unless there is written concurrence from the Helpline Center Volunteer Director or President with proper and prior notification to the organization and RSVP Program.

Prohibited Activities: As per the requirements of the RSVP federal grant, there are some activities that cannot be counted toward a RSVP volunteer's total hours.

- RSVP volunteers are not permitted to conduct or engage in political activities as part of RSVP volunteer service. This includes assisting with electoral activities, voter registration, transportation to polls, or efforts to influence legislation. RSVP volunteers are also not permitted to engage in either pro- or anti-labor activities.
- RSVP volunteers are not permitted to give religious instruction, conduct worship services or engage in any form of proselytization (defined as "to recruit or convert, especially to a new faith, institution or cause") as part of their duties. If a station conducts such activities, they must be separate in time or location from the services supported by RSVP volunteers. (For example volunteering at a food pantry located in a church would be appropriate volunteer work. However, serving communion or passing out bulletins during a church service is not an approved RSVP activity to record volunteer hours.)
- RSVP volunteers are not to be used to replace or displace paid workers. No one should ask volunteers to do anything the staff is unwilling to do.

Safety: Volunteer safety is of upmost importance to The Helpline Center and RSVP program. Conditions that you consider to be unsafe should be reported to your station supervisor promptly. If the situation is not corrected to your satisfaction, contact the Helpline RSVP coordinator who will intervene with the station.

If you are involved in an accident while volunteering, please notify the RSVP office within 48 hours. Should your medical, physical or other conditions change at any time, please notify both your supervisor and the RSVP coordinator, so that appropriate changes can be made to your volunteer duties.



Stories: We know that you will wind up with “stories” from your volunteer service – interesting, funny, or poignant – that deserve a broader audience. Feel free to share these with us; with your permission, we love using real stories to recognize your service or to help inspire someone else to volunteer. We also encourage volunteers and stations to share their volunteer photos with RSVP for use in publications and the RSVP Newsletter.

Reporting Volunteer Hours

As a recipient of a federal grant, the RSVP project is required to collect and record volunteer hours contributed by RSVP volunteers on a monthly basis. These hours are reported to CNCS and local contributors on a quarterly basis to demonstrate the tremendous contribution RSVP volunteers are making in the community.

The RSVP project can only continue if it meets the targets for volunteer hours which are required by the federal agency and which local funders consider when making decisions about ongoing financial support for RSVP. RSVP volunteers contribute thousands of volunteer hours each month, but the only documentation of those hours is the RSVP timesheet.

- Every hour tracked is important, both in tracking an individual volunteer’s time and in tracking the number of service hours contributed by seniors in South Dakota.
- The volunteer should record hours at any volunteer station where service is performed.
- The volunteer is responsible to record hours for each shift and to sign the timesheet.
- It is up to the volunteer & station to make an agreement on how the hours will be then reported back to RSVP.
- The Station is responsible to check those hours, verify their accuracy.
- The station can report hours in any of the following ways:
 1. Sign the timesheet and mail it to the RSVP office
 2. Send an e-mail to the RSVP office with the signed form attached, or with the hours listed in the body of the e-mail
 3. Via the <https://apps.volsoft.com/WebAssistant/cgi1/WebAssistant.dbw?CustomerId=576877&DataSet=01&Action=9&LastAction=9> website to log the hours online.
- The station should have clear procedures in place for assuring that the hours which are reported are accurate and that records are maintained verifying the accuracy.

Timesheets: Travel time to and from the volunteer site should not be counted as volunteer hours; travel as part of the volunteer assignment (i.e., Meals on Wheels deliveries) does count.

- Please notify RSVP of all volunteer assignments so that we can make sure you are credited with all your volunteer activity; please also let agencies where you volunteer know that you are affiliated with RSVP.
- **Reporting of hours should be completed by the 10th of the following month** (for example Nov hours would be reported to RSVP by Dec 10th).
- **Volunteer hours can be mailed to:** Helpline Center
RSVP 1000 N West Ave, Suite 310, Sioux Falls SD 57104
- **Emailed to** rsvp@helplinecenter.org
- **Reported via our online site**
<https://apps.volsoft.com/WebAssistant/cgi1/WebAssistant.dbw?CustomerId=576877&DataSet=01&Action=9&LastAction=9>



RSVP Volunteer's Benefits

Community Impact: The benefits of volunteering at any age include; knowing that you have helped others and had an impact on their wellbeing, giving back to the community, earning a sense of accomplishment, the satisfaction of making at least one small corner of the world a better place, using skills that you have developed over a lifetime OR developing new skills that you've waited a lifetime to explore, and meeting new people.

Membership: RSVP volunteers have membership in a national organization that works to showcase on a national level the power of volunteerism, especially by seniors, in benefit to individual communities and the country as a whole. RSVP has the ear of the federal government; telling them the story of the impact of volunteering increases the chances that resources supporting volunteer efforts will be maintained or augmented.

*Stay
Active.*



Friendship & belonging **fun**
Personal benefit and growth Recognition
Work experience *Learning new things*
Sense of accomplishment **SKILLS & EXPERIENCE**
Giving something back Unique Experiences

Insurance: Helpline RSVP members are automatically enrolled in a supplemental insurance program that helps protect them while they are volunteering at an active RSVP station or are en-route to or from volunteer service at that station. Coverage is offered through CIMA and includes excess accident medical coverage, excess volunteer liability insurance, and excess automobile liability insurance. Volunteers must have their volunteer time accurately documented to take advantage of this coverage.

The insurance coverage includes the following:

- Excess Accidental Injury—Personal injury arising from the volunteer activities while traveling to and from a volunteer station and while volunteering or participating in an activity sponsored by RSVP.
- Accidental Death—In addition to the accidental medical coverage, if death occurs as the result of a covered accident while volunteering, the volunteer’s beneficiary would receive \$2,500.
- Excess Personal Liability—Coverage for a personal injury or property damage claim from another individual which arises out of the volunteer’s performance of regular volunteer duties.
- Excess Automobile Liability—Protection from bodily injury or property damage claims arising while the volunteer is driving his/her own auto as part of the volunteer work. RSVP coverage supplements the volunteer’s primary automobile policy. Volunteers must have a valid driver’s license and proof of liability insurance equal to or greater than the minimum required by the state of South Dakota, or the supplemental insurance paid for by RSVP will not be available. Damage to the volunteer’s vehicle is not covered.
Note: If a volunteer is involved in any kind of accident or incident which could give rise to an insurance claim, the volunteer must contact the RSVP office as soon as possible, but no later than 48 hours after the accident or injury. The RSVP office will take the necessary steps to assure that the volunteer’s right to claim the insurance benefit is protected. The volunteer station must also be notified immediately. These notifications should occur even if the volunteer believes there has been no injury.

More detailed information on benefits is located at www.cimaworld.com or by calling the RSVP Office to request it.

Appreciation: Most agencies show their appreciation for the efforts of their volunteers both formally and informally. Helpline RSVP supplements these expressions of gratitude with recognition events and activities throughout the year.

Regular RSVP Volunteer Recognition Includes:

- An annual appreciation gathering at which members are treated to a meal and formal recognition of their contributions is made.
- Monthly spotlight recognition of volunteers (chosen at random) each month for their contributions to the community. These “Volunteer Spotlights” are featured in our monthly RSVP newsletter.

- Small gifts maybe given and/or events held throughout the year as a form of THANK YOU and to show our appreciation for the time volunteered.
 - National Volunteer Appreciation Week in April
 - Spirit of Volunteerism Awards in May
 - Around Holidays many times small notes or gifts of thanks are given
 - Holiday Events/Celebrations
 - Each month all volunteers who turn in their monthly volunteer hours will have a chance to win a \$20 gift card (typically to Hy-Vee or the Movie Theater) via a monthly drawing.
 - Gift Cards for helping recruit other volunteer's, turn in monthly hours, door prizes for attending events and volunteering are also given as tokens of appreciation.
 - Stamps are given to volunteers who mail in their monthly time sheets.
- Non-Formal events maybe held throughout the year like coffees or social gatherings to thank all RSVP volunteers for their time and commitment as well.
- *NOTE: No form of money should be given to a volunteer for compensation of time worked.*

Transportation: Helpline RSVP is contracted with Project CAR, which will transport volunteers without a viable means of transportation to and from their volunteer assignments on a weekly basis. The volunteer commitment must fit the schedule and availability of Project CAR; priority will be given to volunteers who are responding to the critical areas identified by Senior Corps. For more information about scheduling rides from Project Car please contact your RSVP Coordinator.

Volunteer Conflict & Separation

Self-Termination of Assignment

A volunteer may terminate their assignment when the job is no longer feasible and/or rewarding. Health considerations, dissatisfaction with work, or a lack of fulfillment are among the reasons that a volunteer may determine that he or she should no longer continue to serve in a given location. If the volunteer is interested in continuing to give of his/her time and expertise, alternate volunteer opportunities will be investigated by the RSVP project coordinator and possibilities presented to the volunteer. The RSVP volunteer can resign from active service at any time. To return to active status at a later date, the volunteer may be asked to complete a new application and other paperwork.

Termination by Station or RSVP Program

RSVP has the right to terminate a volunteer without cause, but will always consider the cause leading to the termination. Although it is not possible to list all the forms of behavior or conduct that are considered unacceptable in the work place, the following are examples of infractions or conduct that may result in the limitation and termination of the volunteer's relationship with the agency:

- Theft or inappropriate removal of property
- Misuse of agency funds, equipment, or material.
- Falsification of volunteer timekeeping records
- Inappropriately boisterous or disruptive activity in the work place
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Fighting or threatening violence in the work place
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to the damage of property
- Violation of safety or health rules
- Abuse or mistreatment of volunteers or employees
- Sexual or other unlawful harassment or discrimination
- Violation of anti-discrimination policies and procedures
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the work place
- Repeated failure to follow a supervisor's reasonable request or to carry out a reasonable volunteer job assignment
- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Excessive absenteeism without notice
- Releasing confidential information

When problems or concerns arise between a station and a volunteer, the following actions will take place:

1. The person with concerns is encouraged to discuss them with the manager and volunteer at the volunteer station first.
2. If the concerns aren't resolved, the volunteer or station personnel shall then contact RSVP to discuss the issues with the RSVP staff, who will help to resolve the issues.
3. If the concerns cannot be resolved to each party's satisfaction, the RSVP staff can assist the volunteer to receive a different volunteer assignment. *The RSVP staff can make reassignments at any time they feel that would be beneficial for the volunteer or the smooth operation at the station.*

RSVP volunteers may contact the RSVP office with any concerns regarding this matter.



RSVP Program Coordinator
 1000 N. West Ave Suite 310 Sioux Falls, SD 57104
 605.274.1420 or call 211
rsvp@helplinecenter.org

Inactive Volunteers

RSVP volunteers can resign from active volunteer service at any time. However, all volunteers are asked to notify both the station and RSVP coordinator if they decide to resign. The volunteer can then decide if they wish to find other volunteer opportunities or become an inactive volunteer. Inactive volunteers are still members of the RSVP program and just not currently active in participating in RSVP events and volunteer work. Volunteers who do not participate for 6 months or longer in any volunteer work or RSVP events will be moved over to an "INACTIVE" status in the volunteer system and will stop receiving correspondence from the RSVP program. To return to active status at a later date, the volunteer would need to contact the RSVP Coordinator and may be asked to complete a new application and other paperwork for the RSVP program.



RSVP Volunteer Handbook Agreement

After reading through the RSVP Volunteer Handbook, please sign below stating you have read the Helpline Center RSVP Volunteer Handbook and agree to abide by all of the policies and procedures listed in this document.

By signing this agreement, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the following statements:

- I hereby state that I am 55 years of age or older and offer my services as a volunteer for the Helpline Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).
- I understand that I am not an employee of RSVP, The Helpline Center, the Federal Government, or the volunteer station I am working at and agree to serve without compensation.
- I understand that in my capacity as an RSVP volunteer I may come into contact with confidential information. I agree to keep this information about clients, volunteers, and staff of the volunteer station confidential. I will protect this information to the best of my ability and not disclose it during or after my services as a volunteer has ended.
- I understand that if I use my personal vehicle in my volunteer service, I will arrange to keep active liability insurance equal or greater to the minimum requirements of the state of South Dakota. I will also keep a valid SD Driver's License.
- I will communicate a change in my contact information or termination of my volunteer station to the Helpline Center RSVP Office. I will also work through the RSVP office to settle any issues that may arise at or within my volunteer assignment station.
- I understand that Helpline RSVP will conduct a search of my name through the National Sex Offenders Public Registry.
- I understand that the Helpline RSVP program will keep a volunteer file with my volunteer work and hours, collect those hours from me on a monthly basis and report those hours to the federal government.

RSVP Volunteer Signature

Date

Please return this signed document to The Helpline Center RSVP 1000 N. West Ave Suite 310, Sioux Falls, SD 57104 or email a signed copy to rsvp@helplinecenter.org.