



RSVP

Volunteer Handbook

A Program of Family & Community Services, Inc.

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About Senior Corps

Senior Corps volunteers make a difference in their communities. For decades, volunteers age 55+ have been serving their communities through Senior Corps programs, led by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency for service, volunteering, and civic engagement. Each year, Senior Corps engages more than 200,000 older adults in volunteer service through its Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion, and RSVP programs, enriching the lives of the volunteers and benefiting their communities.

Senior Corps offers several ways to get involved:

[The Foster Grandparent Program](#) connects volunteer's ages 55 and better with children and young people with exceptional needs. Foster Grandparents go into schools or childcare facilities to assist teachers by mentoring at-risk children in one-on-one relationships. Foster Grandparents help students with reading, math and basic skills, including socializing and communication skills. In many cases these children lack the basic resources at home to help them with their school work and Foster Grandparents can help fill that void. The Foster Grandparent also offers compassion and the most valuable possession of all: their time. You don't have to be a teacher-you just need to have a loving heart and a desire to help these children succeed.

[The Senior Companion Program](#) brings together volunteers ages 55 and better with adults in their community who have difficulty with the simple tasks of day-to-day living. Senior Companions serve one-on-one with the frail elderly and other homebound persons called "clients" who have difficulty completing everyday tasks and who need extra assistance in order to continue to live in their own homes and familiar surroundings. Senior Companions help out on a personal level by assisting with shopping and light chores, interacting with doctors, or just making a friendly visit. Senior Companions may also offer short periods of relief, or respite, to the primary caregiver. Clients and caregivers are never charged for the services provided by a Senior Companion.

[RSVP](#) connects volunteers ages 55 and over with service opportunities in their communities that match their skills and availability. There are no educational, income, or experience requirements. RSVP offers a wide variety of volunteer opportunities such as assisting at food pantries, mentoring children, assisting homebound seniors and enhancing the capacity of Non-profit organizations. RSVP volunteers put their unique talents to work to make a difference. RSVP volunteers are placed within community agencies, called stations, and receive training specific to the duties at that station. The number of hours are based on the station's needs and the RSVP volunteer's availability, so volunteers may choose an assignment that fits their schedule. On-going and episodic opportunities are available.

Non-Discrimination and Accessibility

CNCS and F&CS Inc. Senior Corps share a policy to provide equal opportunity for all. We do not discriminate in any aspect of employment or service because of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, mental or physical disability (including HIV/AIDS), sexual orientation, or any other improper criterion.

We also strive to include people with disabilities. Please let our staff know if there are accommodations we can provide in accordance with the ADA and Section 504.

The National Service Initiatives

CNCS has a goal to strengthen national service so that participants engaged in CNCS- supported programs consistently find satisfaction, meaning and opportunity while increasing their impact on community need. To that end, CNCS has developed six initiative areas in which to focus volunteer efforts in order to maximize CNCS's value with grantees, partners and participants.

These six areas and goal areas within those initiatives are as follows:

- Education
- Veterans and Military Families
- Healthy Futures
- Economic Opportunity
- Environmental Stewardship
- Disaster Services

F&CS Senior Corps Programs embrace these initiatives as our programs continue to grow and be a premier volunteer program in Northeast Ohio.

For more information on the history of National Service, please visit the CNCS website at: http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/role_impact/history.asp

Benefits of Volunteering

Each person who chooses to volunteer does so for his or her own personal reasons. Perhaps you have chosen to join Senior Corps because:

- It provides a way to be useful, to help others and to do good deeds
- The work is enjoyable and makes one feel needed and appreciated
- Volunteerism is good for the heart. It increases your self-esteem and competence as well as lessens stress and depression
- Studies show that people who volunteer live longer, healthier and happier lives
- It's a time in life to "give back"
- Some programs, like the Senior Companion Program, respond to the greatest needs of seniors. Someday, you may be in need of this aid
- You can help someone not as healthy or as fortunate as you
- Principles of Volunteering

Whatever your reason is for volunteering, volunteering is always a choice. We also believe that your time benefits the community as well as you, that you are meeting important human, social and environmental needs in the community and that you are an active participant in your community. For this, we thank you!

The Responsibilities of the Senior Corps Staff

We're here to help you!

We want your volunteer experience to be satisfying and meaningful for you. To that end, we are here to answer your questions, share in your successes and help you should issues arise during your service. Here are just some of the responsibilities of the Senior Corps staff:

- All applicants will be interviewed in-person or over the phone so that we understand your skills and goals and so that we may help you become familiar with your program
- National Sex Offender checks will be conducted for all applicants to ensure the safety of volunteers and the people we serve (Criminal background checks may need to be conducted for volunteers who will work with vulnerable populations).
- Confidentiality of each volunteer's personal information will be maintained and retained in locked filing cabinets and will not be shared with outside sources (with the exception of the enrollment form which shall only be shared with the volunteer station)
- Inform the member of any performance measurement goals related to that member's duties
- Provide members with supplemental accident as well as personal and excess automobile liability insurance coverage
- Provide conflict resolution assistance should problems arise between the volunteer, station, client and/or program.
- Reasonable accommodation will be made as requested for individuals with disabilities.

Volunteer Stations

What is a Volunteer Station?

"Volunteer station," also referred to as "volunteer site", is a term we use to refer to a nonprofit organization or government institution that has a written agreement with Family & Community Services Inc. to provide volunteer assignments for RSVP members. Nearly 200 regional organizations have requested the assistance of RSVP volunteers, providing you with endless opportunities to make a difference.

Each volunteer station has a designated station supervisor who also serves as the RSVP contact for that station. He or she will provide you with information about how you may be most helpful and, in return, will listen and work to accommodate your needs as a volunteer. The relationship between a volunteer and the station is one that will grow and enable the volunteer to be a valuable part of the station's accomplishments. Please contact your local RSVP Program Coordinator for a list of current volunteer opportunities. Don't see an opportunity that meets your needs? Let us create a custom volunteer opportunity for you! Feel free to share information with your friends and family members who may also be interested in sharing their time and talent. Our experienced Program Coordinators would be happy to assist them as well.

Volunteer Station Responsibilities:

- To provide safe working conditions for volunteers
- To provide orientation and training for volunteers
- To designate a staff member to serve as supervisor to the RSVP member and to serve as a liaison to the program
- To report volunteer hours (monthly or quarterly) to the RSVP Office
- To verify and sign all volunteer time and reimbursement forms
- To recognize the achievements of RSVP volunteers and to identify them as RSVP volunteers serving through Family & Community Services.

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteer Rights

All Senior Corps members have the following rights:

- To do meaningful and satisfying work in a safe environment
- To be carefully assigned to projects which meet your interests and needs
- To be trained appropriately for your work
- To receive supervision and guidance throughout your community service experience
- To show initiative and leadership
- To voice your opinion and have input into program planning and implementation.
- To be made to feel welcome and to be treated with respect at your station
- To have your service hours documented (certificate or letter)
- To be covered by supplemental insurance
- To have access to a grievance process
- To have your confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Privacy Act of 1988

Volunteer Responsibilities

Though unpaid, volunteers still have responsibilities. As a volunteer you must be prepared to fulfill your volunteer commitment as agreed with your supervisor. The Senior Corps program asks each volunteer to please observe the following principles while performing any volunteer assignment:

- Respect the days and hours agreed upon for your assignment.
- Always notify your supervisor if you cannot report for service, will be late or must leave early. We realize that emergencies and conflicting commitments will arise.
- Be truthful when reporting your hours of service.
- Cooperate with station staff and other volunteers.
- Follow the policies set forth by RSVP and the volunteer station
- If a problem should arise with regard to the assignment, speak with the station supervisor and/or the RSVP Coordinator.
- If you will be away for an extended period of time, or if you choose to discontinue serving at a particular volunteer station, please inform the agency where you volunteer and the RSVP Coordinator in advance.
- If, while working at your volunteer assignment, you encounter confidential information concerning the volunteer station, its employees, and/or the people it serves, you must maintain the confidentiality of that information.
- Please keep the RSVP Coordinator informed of any changes in your phone

number, your address, and your ability to serve as a volunteer via the Volunteer Enrollment Update form.

- Positively represent RSVP and Family & Community Services, Inc. through your professionalism and commitment.

Unallowable Volunteer Activities

For all staff and volunteers of RSVP, the following activities may not be pursued while working or serving with RSVP:

- Political Activities (including partisan or non-partisan activities, endorsement, funding, voter registration, transportation, legislation or proposals, etc.).
- Volunteers shall not express preferences or seek to influence decisions concerning any candidate, political party, election issue, or voting decision while on service hours.
- RSVP volunteers shall not replace paid workers or perform any duty or engage in any activity which would otherwise be performed by an employed worker or which would prevent the hiring of or result in the displacement of employed workers
- Family & Community Services, Inc. will not request or receive any compensation from RSVP volunteers or from beneficiaries for services of RSVP volunteers.
- Labor and anti-labor activity
- RSVP volunteers and/or staff shall not give religious instruction, conduct worship services or attempt to convert anyone to one's own religion while on RSVP time.
- Under no circumstances shall RSVP volunteers receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardian, members of their family, or friends.

Volunteer Hours and Benefits

Hours Requirements

For an RSVP volunteer to remain enrolled with active status, volunteers must serve a minimum of one time per year. Every hour you volunteer is a valuable contribution that needs to be documented for our reports. Our funding sources require that we compile statistics and describe the activity of the RSVP volunteers and these statistics are, in the end, reported to Congress. Also, the complementary insurance benefit provided to you is valid only when you are an active volunteer, serving a minimum of one time per year. Reporting hours is also important in our efforts to recognize every volunteer's contribution.

Your time sheet is a very important tool for RSVP, the volunteer station, and the volunteer. This form allows us all to keep track of the hours served. Volunteers can keep track of their own hours on an individual time sheet that is provided by the RSVP office, or a station time sheet that covers all volunteers. All time sheets must be signed off on by the station supervisor.

Supplemental Insurance

Senior Corps covers all active members, **while they are volunteering**, with three types of insurance, (1) accident, (2) personal liability and (3) excess automobile liability.

1. Accident Insurance

- All volunteers are covered for personal injury occurring during volunteer assignments. This insurance applies while traveling directly to and from the volunteer station and while participating in a volunteer assignment, orientation, actual volunteer service, meal periods while volunteering, recognition attendance, training, and Advisory Council meetings. These benefits apply only in excess of your own insurance. Accidents and/or injuries should be immediately reported to the RSVP office.

2. Personal Liability

- This coverage protects volunteers for a personal injury or property damage liability claim directly related to the performance of their volunteer duties.

3. Excess Automobile Liability

- Protection under this form of insurance covers the volunteer for bodily injury or property damage liability arising from the use of their own vehicle in connection with volunteer work at a station. This coverage is in excess of the auto insurance the volunteer carries as an individual.

This insurance provides some help in the event of an accident but is not a substitute for any insurance you may now carry. To be covered under our insurance policy, you must provide us with an emergency contact and beneficiary on your volunteer enrollment form. If you are driving, you must provide us with your valid driver's license and automobile insurance. **It is the responsibility of the volunteer to update beneficiary and driver's license, and insurance information as changes occur.**

Reporting Accidents

If you have an accident while volunteering, you must immediately report it to your station supervisor. For any type of claim, you will also need to report the accident to your local RSVP staff. If you have an accident claim, you will need to complete a "proof of loss" form and submit it to your local Senior Corps office along with copies of itemized medical bills.

Travel Reimbursement

In some instances, RSVP will provide travel reimbursement to volunteers who must travel as part of their service duties. Volunteers should speak to the RSVP Program Coordinator for further information.

Volunteer Status, Separation and Grievance Procedure

Volunteer Status Policy

Senior Corps volunteers are volunteers who complete an enrollment form and are successfully placed in a volunteer position with an RSVP Volunteer Station. There are no restrictions based on education, income or experience. Volunteers must maintain an updated membership form and regularly submit volunteer service hours. Any time a volunteer's basic information changes, the volunteer should complete a Senior Corps Volunteer Enrollment Update form. A volunteer may choose to temporarily inactivate or close his or her enrollment in RSVP at any time.

Active Volunteers

RSVP volunteers must maintain an updated volunteer enrollment sheet (RSVP volunteers must serve a minimum of one time per year to remain active).

Inactive Volunteers

Suspending service and reporting due to illness, travel, or other needs.

If a volunteer will be unable to volunteer for a period of time, the volunteer shall inform the RSVP office or station supervisor.

For RSVP, after twelve months at inactive status a volunteer will be contacted to see if he or she is able to return to active status before having enrollment closed.

Once a volunteer's status is deemed as inactive, they are no longer considered enrolled in service. If the volunteer chooses, they may re-enroll, however, if the gap in service is longer than 30 days, the entire enrollment process (including all relevant background checks) must be repeated.

Closed/Terminated Volunteers

A volunteer enrollment may be closed for any of the following conditions:

- Inactivity
- Reporting fewer than the minimum hours of service. An RSVP volunteer who reports no hours of service during a year does not meet the minimum requirements for maintaining membership.
- Failure to maintain updated information
- Misconduct deemed severe or excessive by the management team and in consultation with the State Program Specialist. Examples of misconduct include but are not limited to the following: theft, embezzlement, dishonesty, disclosing confidential information, inappropriate interactions with a student,

- client, or program manager/coordinator, falsification of records/documents.
- Volunteer retires or is asked to retire
- Volunteer requests to close enrollment

Volunteer Counseling Report

Should a volunteer have deficiencies in performance, conduct or violates an F&CS, Inc. or RSVP policy, the RSVP Coordinator will meet with the volunteer to deliver a Volunteer Counseling Report. This report will be maintained in the volunteer's file.

Process for Termination

In the event that it is determined a volunteer needs terminated from service, the following will occur:

- The RSVP Coordinator will contact and arrange a meeting with the volunteer and station supervisor.
- The volunteer will be provided a Volunteer Counseling Report regarding the issue for termination as well as a copy of Senior Corps Policy 625 for the grievance process.

Process for Grievances

A volunteer is expected to consult with his/her RSVP Coordinator regarding any action, occurrence or attitude either expressed or implied which is perceived as unfair or inequitable during RSVP service. If a satisfactory agreement for resolution cannot be made through regular supervisory channels, the volunteer may appeal to the F&CS Human Resources Director within 7 business days, in writing, with a copy to his/her RSVP Coordinator and the Director of RSVP.

If a volunteer files a written grievance with the Human Resources Director and no satisfactory solution is reached within 7 working days after the grievance is received, the Human Resources Director will forward the written grievance to the Executive Director. If a volunteer brings a grievance forward, the Executive Director's decision will be final.

This policy is based on F&CS Procedure No: HR3600.

RSVP Director
Gerard Kelly
(330)480-0352

RSVP Assistant Director
Sarah Capretta
(567)393-6446

Senior Corps Office
Kent, Ohio
(330)677-3939

Volunteer Retirement

F&CS, Inc. values the service of the RSVP volunteers and recognizes that it can be a demanding responsibility which requires a significant amount of energy and time from volunteers. As a member, you may reach a point in your life when the demands of service become too great. Conversely, the RSVP staff may at some point recognize that the stress of service may be too great for you. If this happens, the RSVP staff are here to help you transition to retirement.

Some indications that you may be ready to retire include the following:

- Declining mental or health status that impacts your duties
- Not looking forward to going to the service site
- Being bothered by the noise and activity level at the site
- Feeling irritated by the clients or children served
- Becoming grouchy, argumentative or overly sensitive with the staff
- Being unwilling to accept directions from the staff
- Preferring to sit silently rather than engage with the public, clients or children
- Falling asleep on duty
- Not enjoying or participating in activities that were previously pleasurable
- Being very tired or glad to leave at the end of the day.

Should you be considering retirement from service or should the RSVP staff observe that retirement should be considered, a meeting will occur between you and the RSVP staff of that program. The staff member may also decide to interview the station supervisor or station staff to help determine your status. Our focus will be on behalf of the program to provide quality service. While we feel loyalty and affection for our volunteer, all parties must assess if service shall continue. At times, maybe re-training, a new assignment, making a reasonable accommodation for a disability or a vacation from service may be all you need to re-fuel. However, should concern regarding retirement still exist, another meeting can be held. At all times, your dignity and respect for your service shall be at the forefront of any retirement discussions.

Program Evaluation and Guidance

Program Evaluation

In order to maintain our programs, RSVP must demonstrate the impact we are having within our communities to the Corporation for National and Community Service. Each federally funded grant has performance measures that we must report on periodically. These program measures are customized for each program. For example, for RSVP, we may measure how many seniors and low-income individuals are assisted by RSVP volunteers working with a medication access program to secure discounted or free prescriptions.

Your volunteer assignment/position description is meant to prepare you for the duties at your station. It may also be directly linked to a performance measure. **If it is**, you may, throughout your service year, be asked to partake in a survey regarding your duties. We hope that you will take the time to complete this paperwork so that we may better demonstrate the vital work our volunteers do to meet the critical issues facing our communities. Please feel free to discuss any of this further with your county's RSVP staff or the Director of RSVP, as we are always open to improving our impact.

Advisory Council

Federal regulations for all Senior Corps programs mandate that community participation in the program shall be secured by way of an Advisory Council. This council shall be comprised of individuals who are:

- Knowledgeable of human and social needs of the community
- Competent in the field of community service and volunteerism
- Who have interest in and knowledge of the capability of older adults
- Capable of helping the sponsor meet its administrative and program responsibilities including fund-raising, publicity and impact programming
- Reflective of the diverse composition that reflects the demographics of the service area.

At F&CS, each county has an Advisory Council from the local community whose members participate in a minimum of quarterly meetings to provide input into the direction of local programming. We are grateful to each person's commitment of their time and expertise's in helping our programs continue to grow and improve.

Tips for a Satisfying Volunteer Experience

Tips for a Satisfying Volunteer Experience

- Be open and honest regarding your expectations, goals and skills.
- Accept only realistic assignments and have a clear understanding of the job. Ask clarifying questions!
- Carry out your duties promptly and reliably.
- Accept guidance and direction from RSVP and station staff and volunteers.
- Remain open to constructive feedback from your supervisor and others.
- Participate in required trainings.
- Follow the organization's dress code.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Discuss satisfactions, dissatisfactions and suggestions for upgrading or changing of your volunteer assignments with your station supervisor or RSVP Coordinator.
- Be punctual, and notify your station supervisor of absences as much in advance as possible.
- Be alert, sober and drug free while volunteering.
- Contact RSVP for a new assignment if the one you have is no longer a good fit or if you'd enjoy an additional assignment.

Contact us any time with your questions and suggestions!

Code of Ethics & Handbook Acknowledgment

Volunteer Name: _____

I recognize that as a representative of Family & Community Services, Inc. and of Senior Corps that I assume certain accountability and responsibilities that include:

1. I will ensure confidential treatment of all information including information about clients, students, or the public served.
2. I will interpret "volunteer" to mean that I have agreed to work without compensation in money, except for any mileage reimbursements.
3. I promise to take an attitude of open-mindedness, interest, and investment towards my position and I will demonstrate a willingness to be trained.
4. I will approach my service with professionalism and with high standards for customer service and for my safety as well as the safety of those I serve.
5. I realize that I may have assets that my co-workers may not have and that they may have assets I do not have. I will not let this make me feel inadequate, but will endeavor to assist in developing good teamwork.
6. I will treat all individuals whom I serve with respect and consideration at all times.
7. I will maximize the quality of life of those I serve by providing quality care in the most appropriate and least restrictive environment and by encouraging independence.
8. I will not use the possessions of anyone I serve for my personal use nor will I accept money or tips from anyone I serve or their families.
9. I will not consume alcoholic beverages or use medicine or drugs (except for treatment of a medical problem) while on service hours.
10. I will keep my volunteer station and the Senior Corps office

current with respect to changes I may see in the health or well-being of individuals served.

11. I will be truthful in the reporting of my hours to the station supervisor and/or the Senior Corps office.
12. I will complete required paperwork for Senior Corps as needed and I will alert my program's office to any changes in my personal information or beneficiary.
13. I will wear my I.D. Badge.
14. I understand that this handbook as well as Senior Corps policies are subject to change and may supersede the information contained within this handbook. (RSVP volunteers will be notified via the station supervisor or RSVP Coordinator for any relevant policy changes.) I understand that I can request an updated handbook if needed.
15. I understand that if I use my vehicle for service that I shall keep it clean and maintained.
16. If I claim transportation reimbursement and I drive, I understand that I must keep my driver's license and automobile insurance current and I will provide the Senior Corps office with updated copies of my license and insurance. I understand that transportation reimbursement is subject to change as grant budgets allow.

I, _____, have received, read and will abide by the Code of Ethics and the handbook for Senior Corps volunteers. This handbook has been reviewed with me by the Senior Corps Staff for my program. I may request a signed copy of the Code of Ethics for my records.

_____ Print Volunteer Name

_____ Volunteer Signature

_____ Date

_____ Senior Corps Staff

_____ Date

VOLUNTEER UPDATE AND STATUS CHANGE FORM

Date: _____ County: _____
Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____
Email: _____

Beneficiary and/or Emergency Contact:

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____

Is your emergency Contact the same as beneficiary: Yes ___ No ___

Where are you currently volunteering: _____

Change of Status: Active: ___ Returning Date: _____
Inactive: ___ Date: _____ Reason: _____
Terminated: ___ Date: _____ Reason: _____
Resigned: ___ Date: _____

Administrative Use Only:
Staff Notes:

Date update completed in Volgistics: _____ Staff Initials: _____