

RSVP

Lead With Experience

RSVP of Madison County

Official Handbook



RSVP
Getting Things Done.

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** 

RSVP of Madison County

Directory

RSVP Business Office

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Days and Hours of Operation

Monday through Friday - 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM

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Welcome to RSVP of Madison County

This handbook will help you to learn about RSVP- its history, purpose and its importance to the community.

RSVP will be a rich and rewarding experience for you the volunteer and a tremendous help to our community.

The Staff and Advisory Council of RSVP look forward to a mutually satisfying relationship. We are here to help you in any way we can.

To RSVP, You (the volunteer) are indispensable!!!!



History

RSVP of Madison County was established in 1972 to answer a critical need in Madison County identified by a Cornell Cooperative Extension Poverty Study Committee.

The committee found that there was need for a method for volunteers to be connected with meaningful activities and at the same time the committee found the number of senior citizens in the county to be increasing.

In response, RSVP was developed to provide opportunities for retired persons 55 years of age and older to participate more fully in their communities through significant volunteer service. Since its inception, RSVP has been an advocate for needed services for the elderly.

Over the years, RSVP has broadened its scope to apply the service and talents of volunteers to community needs involving residents of all ages. RSVP currently engages over 650 active volunteers at approximately 50 not-for-profit organizations and service providers throughout Madison County. On average, RSVP Volunteers contribute over 62,000 hours of service annually.

RSVP continues to operate under the sponsorship of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Madison County in Morrisville. It has the distinction of being the first rural program funded in New York State.

The Corporation for National and Community Service provides guidance for program implementation and federal grant funding. RSVP is also supported and funded by local community funding sources.

Purpose

RSVP provides a variety of volunteer and service opportunities for persons aged 55 or over. The volunteer need not be retired, although RSVP was originally developed to provide significant volunteer opportunities for the retired person.

The organization directs volunteers to needed and worthwhile assignments, which impact on community need and improve the quality of life in Madison County.

Another important point is that volunteering leads to new discoveries and new friends. Plus, studies show that volunteering helps people live longer and promotes a positive outlook on life.

Staff

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Advisory Council

The RSVP Advisory Council provides perspective and active assistance to the project staff and the sponsor, Cornell Cooperative Extension.

The Advisory Council includes community leaders, representatives from volunteer stations and professionals from public and private agencies.

At least one-fourth of the Advisory Council are persons aged 55 or over.

Volunteers

Requirements of membership state that individuals must be fifty-five years of age or older. There are no dues or fees. RSVP places volunteers at 'stations' which are local non-profit organizations which submit a request for volunteers and complete a memorandum of understanding with RSVP. This insures that RSVP volunteers are placed with professional organizations.

In turn, RSVP volunteers maintain confidentiality, reliability and responsibility to the station. If a volunteer is unable to be at his or her station, always contact the person in charge or follow the established system used for absenteeism and/or replacement outlined by the station leader.

RSVP Host Stations

Host stations are non-profit agencies primarily within Madison County where RSVP volunteers are placed. The stations agree to a Memorandum of Understanding, assign and supervise volunteers and provide any needed training for the volunteer work.

Other responsibilities of host stations....

1. Develop volunteer assignments and job descriptions.
2. Assist with meals and/or snacks when possible.
3. Provide volunteer safety measures.
4. Document volunteer time (hours worked) and submit records to RSVP.

Memorandum of Understanding

A memorandum of understanding is an agreement signed by RSVP and the non-profit agency. This agreement defines the responsibilities of the participating agency and RSVP, and states other necessary legal guidelines about accessibility and accommodations for disabled individuals and anti-discrimination policies.

RSVP Volunteer Opportunities

RSVP volunteers are recruited to respond to significant and varied community needs, some examples:

Youth Mentors
Weather Reporters
Food Pantry Helpers
Adult Literacy Tutors
Income tax preparers
Disaster Preparedness
Osteo-exercise trainers
Red Cross Blood drives
Salesclerks in thrift shops
Victims of Violence Hotline
Ambulance Crews / Dispatchers
Ombudsmen / Resident Advocates
Chenango Water Exercise Program Leaders
Drivers to transport the elderly to medical appointments
Operate EBT and credit card machine at Farmer's Markets

Hours

An accurate record of volunteer hours needs to be kept at the worksite to which you are assigned. This documents your service to the community.

Some volunteers on special assignments maintain their own hours sheet. In this case, individual arrangements are made. Remember, your time and efforts are valuable. Please validate that with time sheets signed by the volunteer station director or (if applicable) by you.

Communications

Communication is a vital part of the RSVP program. The RSVP staff coordinates projects with the community, agencies and the volunteers and collaborates with many human service agencies.

The program encourages volunteers and agencies to contact the RSVP office if any problems or questions arise. Also, RSVP submits newsworthy articles to all local newspapers for publicity and information.

RSVP publishes a quarterly newsletter and sends regular informational updates to RSVP members, station leaders, and community organizations via the weekly E-News letter.

Transportation

Volunteers who drive themselves and others to volunteer assignments can be reimbursed for mileage expenses at the current approved rate per mile. A mileage form documenting trips, destination and the number of miles should be completed and returned to the RSVP office at the beginning of each month.

This form must be matched to the station time sheet before reimbursement can be made. The RSVP Advisory Council determines and reviews policies relating to travel distances. Volunteers may receive a maximum of \$5 round trip and not to exceed \$15 per month.

Insurance

All active RSVP volunteers are covered by supplemental accident, general liability and excess auto insurance while on volunteer assignment.

The liability insurance coverage applies:

- when on duty and acting in accordance with RSVP guidelines,
- following the guidelines of the volunteer site,
- when all other applicable pre-conditions for coverage under the policy are met.

This insurance does not duplicate expenses paid by medical or any other valid and collectible insurance coverage. Time sheets must validate the volunteer assignment. Contact the RSVP office to file a claim.

Recognition

RSVP volunteers who are considered active are honored at the annual spring recognition banquet. A volunteer is required to donate at least twelve volunteer hours annually to be considered active. RSVP also sponsors special tribute events throughout the year to show appreciation for volunteer service.

**“Volunteers are the only human beings on the face
of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion,
unselfish caring, patience,
and just plain love for one another.”**

--Erma Bombeck

Thank you!

RSVP Volunteer Policies

Volunteers:

- Must complete the RSVP Registration Form and receive orientation to his or her volunteer station assignment.
- Will receive the RSVP Volunteer packet which includes RSVP nametag, handbook and necessary forms.
- May only receive RSVP credit for working in non-religious, non-political and non-profit agencies and organizations.
- Agree not to participate in partisan or non-partisan political activities that would identify RSVP with such activity, and under the auspices of RSVP may not work with voter registration or in transporting voters to the polls.
- Does not give religious instruction, conduct worship services or engage in any form of proselytizing as part of RSVP duties.
- May not accept any compensation for RSVP services, but may suggest a contribution to RSVP instead.
- Shall have the right to take proper action when dissatisfaction occurs. A "Grievance Policy" has been formalized and may be obtained from the RSVP Office.
- Understand that the volunteer has the right to terminate volunteer services at any time and for any reason and that RSVP shall have the right to suspend or release a volunteer at any time and for any reason.
- Will abide by the Volunteer Code of Conduct as outlined in this handbook and adhere to any policies in place at the volunteer site.

RSVP of Madison County Volunteer Code of Conduct

- Preserve the confidentiality of information (and sign confidentiality agreement if required by volunteer role) about program participants and RSVP internal affairs.
- Fulfill assigned volunteer duties, including completion of required RSVP records or reports, in a timely manner.
- Work cooperatively with Station and RSVP staff and other volunteers.
- Accept supervision and support from Station and RSVP staff and/or supervisory volunteers.
- Respect and uphold the rights and dignity of all staff, other volunteers and all individuals who participate in Station and RSVP programs recognizing that people's values, beliefs, customs, and strengths differ.
- Encourage participation of and respect for individuals of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives.
- Refrain from the use of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs or inappropriate language while on duty as an RSVP volunteer.
- Commit no illegal or abusive act.
- Report all unsafe conditions and accidents to Station Leader or RSVP staff as soon as possible.

Closing Comment...

Thank You for becoming a member of RSVP of Madison County. The staff is very pleased to have you serving in various community programs. Your dedication is greatly appreciated and your contribution really does...

**enrich others' lives,
make a difference,
and make a positive impact
on the quality of life within our community!**



Acknowledgements

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program is part of the Senior Service Corps within the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal domestic volunteer agency. Also, support is received from the New York State Office for the Aging.

Annual local support is given by the United Way of Greater Oneida and the Community Chests of Canastota, Cazenovia-Fenner-Nelson, Hamilton, and the Town of Sullivan and other local funding sources.



Thank You!

Sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Madison County