



# Volunteer Handbook & Guidelines

### **Thank you for volunteering with the Iowa Department on Aging RSVP!**

The Retired & Senior Volunteer Program, known as RSVP, is part of the largest volunteer network for people 55+ called AmeriCorps Seniors. RSVP volunteers use their skills, talents, and life experiences to help meet community needs through service. Traditionally, volunteers throughout the state of Iowa spend countless hours servicing others in a variety of ways including: tutoring and mentoring students, increasing food security, providing transportation, and being companions for older adults. In recent years, RSVP volunteers have also become an essential part of response efforts in the aftermath of community emergencies and natural disasters.

RSVP connects nonprofits and public organizations like food banks and schools with passionate, dedicated, and skilled volunteers. Volunteers help these organizations meet their missions which in turn, improves the quality of life for Iowans. When Iowans have the support and services they need, they are able to remain independent and age in their homes longer and more successfully. RSVP plays an integral role in addressing local needs and ensuring that volunteers are trained and prepared to deliver the high quality of service that our network of community partners has come to expect.

### **About the Handbook**

This handbook is designed to introduce you to the Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) RSVP and to provide a basic overview of the policies and procedures that provide all of us guidance and direction. As a volunteer you will be provided with a safe work environment, necessary volunteer training, supervision and recognition. In return we look forward to your commitment to the IDA RSVP, respect to other staff members, the communities we serve and to perform your assigned duties to the best of your abilities.

As our organization grows and changes, there will be a need to modify policies, practices and other information in this handbook. When such changes occur, you will be notified by an announcement or update. If you have any questions or need any clarification of the information contained in this handbook, please contact the one of the IDA RSVP Coordinators (see contact information.)

### **Who are RSVP Volunteers?**

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP is a national program of AmeriCorps along with the Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs. RSVP pairs adults aged 55+ who want to use some of their free time to make a difference in their communities with organizations facing local, regional, and national challenges. Partner Organizations serve the needs in the local community with the help of volunteers. **RSVP volunteers** choose how, where, and when they want to serve. The IDA RSVP provides volunteer services in Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Iowa, Keokuk, Louisa, Mahaska, Monona, Montgomery, Poweshiek, Shelby, and Woodbury counties. When you decide to pursue a volunteer opportunity, we'll introduce you to the agency partner in your county and assist you in getting started!

### **Why Volunteer with RSVP?**

- Volunteering helps citizens stay active, involved, and connected to their community during semi- retirement or after retirement.
- Studies show that adults who volunteer actually live longer, healthier, and have more fulfilling lives.
- Volunteers can meet new people, learn a new skill, share an experience with a friend, and.... HAVE FUN!
- RSVP Volunteer Benefits Include:
  - ✓ *Select from a variety of opportunities (our volunteers' preferences are our priority)*
  - ✓ *Stay involved in your community*
  - ✓ *Results driven assignments*
  - ✓ *Pre-service orientation (group or one-on-one)*
  - ✓ *Ongoing support available (follow-up, redirection)*
  - ✓ *Web-based information available*
  - ✓ *Flexible scheduling*
  - ✓ *Social opportunities*
  - ✓ *Supplemental Insurance (see details below)*
  - ✓ *Mileage reimbursement (see details below)*
  - ✓ *Recognition (the contributions of volunteers are consistently acknowledged with formal and informal methods of recognition)*

### **Funding and Support – IDA RSVP Sources of Income**

Federal grant from AmeriCorps Seniors

State of Iowa

### **Volunteer Placement Guidelines**

**Volunteer Station:** The public, non-profit, and/or health care agencies for which RSVP recruits and places volunteers.

**Non-Discrimination:** No person, based on race, color, sex, age\*, religion, handicap, national origin, military reserve or veteran status, marital status, limited English proficiency, or political affiliation shall be excluded from participation in RSVP or with IDA RSVP.

*\*IDA RSVP utilizes adult volunteers of all ages within our organization. However, only those volunteers who are 55 years of age and older can be placed by RSVP with other Volunteer Stations (federal guideline).*

### **Special Limitations for RSVP Volunteers**

- **Political Activities:** An RSVP volunteer may not be involved in political activities when serving in the capacity of an RSVP volunteer. This includes: electoral activities, voter registration, voter transportation to polls, and efforts to influence legislation).
- **Religious Activities:** An RSVP volunteer may not give religious instruction, conduct worship service, or engage in proselytization as a part of their duties.
- **Non-Displacement of Employed Workers:** An RSVP volunteer may not perform any service or duty, or engage in any activity which would otherwise be performed by an employed worker, or which could supplant the hiring of employed workers or impair existing contracts for service.
- **Non-compensation for Services:** Under no circumstances shall an RSVP volunteer receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardian, members of their family, or friends. No person, organization, or agency shall request or receive any compensation for services of RSVP volunteers.
- **Volunteer Status:** RSVP volunteers are not employees of the Iowa Department on Aging RSVP, the volunteer stations, the Corporation for National and Community Service, or the Federal Government.

### **Volunteer Safety and Safe Practices**

- RSVP volunteers, at all times, must be fit for the roles they perform, in order to complete their jobs safely. Should medical, physical, or other conditions change, at any time, it is the duty of the RSVP volunteer to inform the RSVP Director so that appropriate changes may be made with regard to volunteer activities.
- If at any time during your volunteer service/assignment you feel that your safety is being compromised for any reason, contact RSVP staff right away.
- If weather conditions create unsafe travel conditions, you may be contacted by RSVP, or the volunteer station staff, requesting that you do not get out. If you feel that the conditions are not safe for travel, you may also notify the volunteer station and/or RSVP to report your absence.

## **Volunteer Policies and Procedures/Code of Conduct**

When volunteering, an RSVP volunteer must behave in accordance with the volunteer station's (including IDA RSVP) guidelines for staff and/or volunteer staff. This includes requirements for training, attendance, dress code and hygiene, language use, or any other guidelines established by the volunteer station. Any concerns regarding the volunteer station should be taken first to the volunteer station supervisor. If concerns are not resolved, please contact the RSVP Director or RSVP Coordinators.

- 1. Volunteer Registration Form:** All volunteers must complete a registration form and fill in all required fields. We collect personal information only for reasonable purposes. All personal information provided by you to IDA RSVP will be kept confidential and will not be shared with any other agency or organization.
- 2. Orientation and Training:** Each volunteer is provided with an orientation to the organization, its policies and practices, including the rights and responsibilities of volunteers. Each volunteer receives training customized to the volunteer assignment and the individual needs of the volunteer.

### **3. Background Check Policy**

The Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) will perform background checks on all potential IDA RSVP volunteers using the Iowa Single Contact Repository (SING) to search Iowa Criminal History and Sex Offender Registry information held by the Department of Public Safety/Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI), Department of Human Services' (DHS), Central Abuse Registry for Child Abuse (CA), and Dependent Adult Abuse (DAA), as well as Professional License information. All background check fees will be paid by IDA RSVP, not the individual.

### **Enhanced Checks for Certain Volunteer Positions**

#### Drivers

For IDA RSVP volunteers who will be driving consumers, an Iowa DOT Driving Record Release form will be required. Driving records may be obtained as part of the volunteer evaluation process.

#### Vulnerable Populations

For IDA RSVP volunteers working with vulnerable populations, IDA will do a Criminal History Check requiring their signature.

***Vulnerable populations are: (1) children age 17 or younger; (2) persons age 70 or older; and (3) individuals with disabilities. "Individuals with disabilities" has the same meaning given to the term as set forth in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 705 (20)(B), and includes any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. Recurring access is "the ability on more than one occasion to approach, observe, or communicate with an individual through physical proximity or other means, including but not limited to electronic or telephonic communication."***

### **Ineligibility**

A volunteer applicant under investigation for or charged with criminal acts will be disqualified from volunteering until the issue has been resolved. All volunteer placements are contingent upon a background check.

Any person will be disqualified from serving as an IDA RSVP volunteer if they:

- refuse to consent to any part of the background check;
- make a false statement in connection with the background check;
- are registered, or are required to be registered, on a state sex offender registry or the National Sex Offender Registry;
- have been convicted of murder, as defined in 18 U.S.C. 1111;
- are registered in the Central Abuse Registry.

Minor violations will not prohibit a volunteer from serving. Anyone who has been convicted of, plead guilty or “no contest” to, or received a deferred judgment or suspended sentence to a felony or is placed on the Sex Offender, Child Abuse, or Adult Abuse registry will be automatically disqualified from volunteering.

If the background check is returned with questionable results, the Director will consult with a representative or representatives from the Volunteer Station to determine if a volunteer is suitable to serve vulnerable populations. The circumstances of a conviction will be considered in relation to the nature and duties of the volunteer position.

Iowa Department on Aging will provide a reasonable opportunity for the individual to review and challenge the factual accuracy of a result before action is taken to exclude the individual from the position.

- 4. Hours Reporting:** Volunteers of IDA RSVP must always truthfully report hours of service performed as well as mileage to be reimbursed.
- 5. Standard of Appearance/Dress Code:** Dress appropriately for your duties. For example, physical work requires clothing that is comfortable and durable. Clothes cannot be torn, grayed, dirty, or reveal any part of the cleavage or midriff. While volunteering for IDA RSVP, staff will provide appropriate training and advise you regarding dress code, which will vary depending on the assignment.
- 6. Drug & Alcohol Abuse:** The use of illegal drugs or alcohol, or being under the influence of the same, while performing hours of service is strictly prohibited and shall be cause for termination of all volunteer placements through IDA RSVP.
- 7. Attendance and Absenteeism:** If at any time you are unable to be at a Volunteer Station for your scheduled shift due to illness or an emergency, please alert the Volunteer Station staff or an IDA RSVP Coordinator as soon as possible (see contact below.) Please communicate with the Volunteer Station staff or IDA RSVP regarding any scheduled absences—such as vacation—as far in advance as possible.

- Volunteer Separation

- Volunteers who do not report at least one hour during an 18-month period may become inactive as an RSVP volunteer. Volunteers who become inactive will be re-activated when placement by RSVP and subsequent volunteering resumes.
  - Volunteers may terminate their volunteer assignment at any time by notifying an RSVP staff person. The RSVP staff will assist the volunteer in locating an alternate volunteer placement, when requested.
  - The RSVP Director or an RSVP volunteer station may separate an RSVP volunteer for cause, including, but not limited to, excessive or unauthorized absences, misconduct (as noted in the Conduct section of these guidelines), a breach in confidentiality, and/or inability to perform assignments or accept supervision.
- 8. Confidentiality Agreement:** Some assignments involve working directly with a client of a Volunteer Station. In many cases, client information is confidential. No client information or proprietary information will be shared outside of RSVP or the appropriate Volunteer Station. Depending on the assignment, you will be asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement.
  - 9. Supervision:** Volunteers receive a level of supervision appropriate to the task and should be provided with regular opportunities to give and receive feedback.
  - 10. Evaluation:** The impact and contribution of volunteers and the volunteer program are continually evaluated to ensure the needs of the organization are being met in fulfilling its mandate.

## **Supplemental Insurance**

### **Accident Insurance**

Accident insurance covers\* AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in RSVP for personal injury during travel between their homes and places of assignment, during their volunteer service, during meal periods while serving as a volunteer, and while attending project-sponsored activities. Protection shall be provided against claims in excess of any benefits or services for medical care or treatment available to the volunteer from other sources, including:

- health insurance coverage,
- other hospital or medical service plans,
- any coverage under labor-management trusted plans, union-welfare plans, employer organization plans, or employee-benefit organization plans,
- coverage under any governmental program or provided by any statute.

When benefits are approved in the form of services rather than cash payments, the reasonable cash value of each service rendered must be considered in determining the applicability of this provision. The benefits payable must include the benefits that would have been payable had a claim been duly made. The benefits payable must be reduced to the extent necessary so that the sum of such reduced benefits and all the benefits provided for by any other plan must not exceed the volunteer's total expenses.

The sponsor must provide AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers with the following accident insurance coverage:

- \$50,000 or more for accidental medical expenses.
- \$50 for repair or replacement of damaged eyeglass frames and \$50 for replacement of broken prescription eyeglass lenses or contact lenses.
- \$500 for repair of dentures; \$500 per tooth for treatment of injury to natural teeth, limited to a total of \$900.
- \$2,500 for accidental death\*\* or dismemberment.

\*Coverage eligibility requires a Driver's License number and Primary Insurance provider on volunteer application.

\*\*Accident Insurance coverage includes an accidental death benefit of \$2,500, should an injury from an accident covered by the policy result in the volunteers' death. If there is no named beneficiary or surviving beneficiary, the Covered Person's loss of life benefits will be paid in one sum to the first surviving class of the following: 1. Spouse; 2. Child or children; 3. Mother or father; 4. Sisters or brothers; 5. The estate of the Covered Person

If you wish to identify a death benefit beneficiary different from the surviving class listed above, please submit a written request (form available from IDA RSVP) to IDA RSVP. During your participation as an RSVP volunteer, you may change your beneficiary anytime by submitting another written request. Requests can be sent to 510 E 12<sup>th</sup> St, Des Moines, IA 50319 or Email to [idadsvp@iowa.gov](mailto:idadsvp@iowa.gov) (must be requested in the body of an email, not as an attachment).

### **Personal Liability Insurance for Volunteers**

Protection is provided against claims in excess of protection provided by other insurance. It does not include professional liability coverage. Protection is provided against claims in excess of protection provided by other insurance. IDA RSVP provides third-party protection for volunteers against injury or property damage claims arising out of their volunteer service activities. The amount of protection is \$1,000,000 for each occurrence of personal injury or property damage in excess of any other valid and collectible insurance, and \$3,000,000 annual aggregate.

### **Excess Automobile Liability Insurance**

To avoid a gap in coverage between that provided by a volunteer's personal vehicle insurance and liability claims in excess of that coverage, IDA RSVP provides Excess Automobile Liability Insurance coverage of not less than \$500,000 each accident for bodily injury and/or property damage.

IDA RSVP provides protection against claims in excess of the greater of either:

- The liability insurance volunteers carry on their own automobiles
- The limits of the applicable state Motor Vehicle Financial Responsibility Law or
- In the absence of a state financial responsibility law, \$50,000 for each person, each accident, and for property damage

Please contact the IDA RSVP Office (see contact below) immediately if you need to file a claim.

### **Volunteer Mileage Reimbursement**

Transportation costs incurred while RSVP volunteers are performing their volunteer assignment can be reimbursed by IDA RSVP. For example, home delivered meal volunteers can be reimbursed by IDA RSVP for miles to and from the meal pick up site.

All volunteer reimbursement provisions are subject to change without notice pending the availability of funds to support these benefits.

- Reimbursement for mileage must be requested on a State of Iowa travel form that has been signed by the volunteer.
- You must have a valid Driver's license. (The volunteers DL# must be provided on the RSVP Volunteer Application and will be kept on file as confidential information).
- Reimbursement is paid out at a rate of .39/mile. Mileage will be calculated by IDA based on the most direct route via Google Maps.
- Travel is reimbursed for miles traveled to and from an RSVP initiated volunteer assignment and/or RSVP Volunteer Station.
- Mileage will be paid out monthly by check from IDA RSVP. A travel reimbursement form must be filled out, signed, and returned within 10 days of the following month. (Example: October hours due by November 10<sup>th</sup>)

### **Attachments Included**

You will be provided with any or all of the following at an orientation:

- IDA RSVP Volunteer Enrollment Form (unless already provided)
- IDA RSVP Volunteer Driver Form\*  
\*Required only if you will provide transportation services
- IDA RSVP Client Application Form
- Supplemental Insurance Brochure (upon request)
- IDA RSVP Volunteer Job Description(s)
- Iowa DOT Driving Record Release Form (if volunteer position requires)
- Criminal History Check (if volunteer position requires)



**RSVP Staff Contact Information and Office Locations**

Zachary Rhein, Director of Programs Division

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Julie Bergeson, RSVP Director

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\*Main office

510 E 12th St., Des Moines, IA 50319

**VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have received and read the Iowa Department on Aging RSVP  
(Print Name)

Handbook. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I have regarding the contents of the handbook and I have read the above statement and I understand IDA RSVP's requirement for a criminal record check prior to further consideration of my application for volunteer placement. I understand that I am being asked to voluntarily provide information. I further understand that failure to provide the information will disqualify me from further consideration concerning the volunteer position for which I might apply.

**Signature of Volunteer** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_