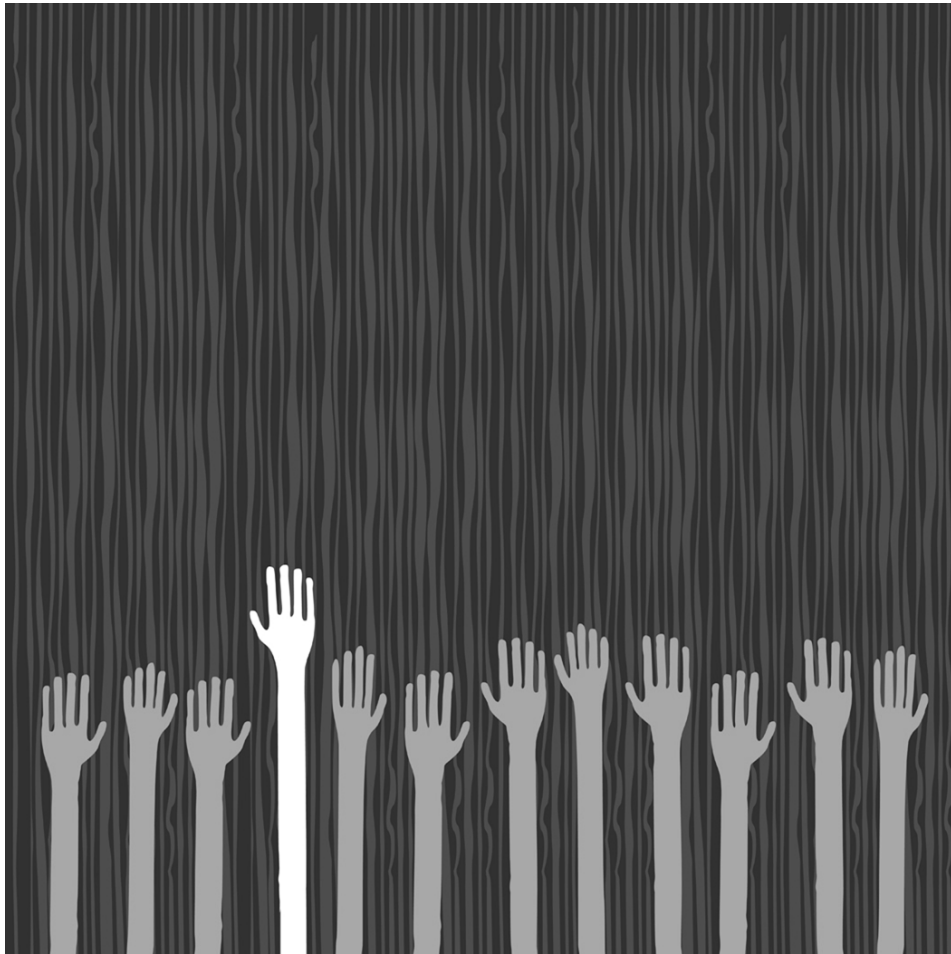


VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Black Hills State University RSVP



RSVP

Lead With Experience





About Us

RSVP has a dual purpose of engaging persons 55 and older in volunteer service to meet critical community needs and to provide a high quality experience that will enrich the lives of the volunteers

Introduction

Black Hills State University RSVP is a nationally recognized volunteer coordination agency that seeks to match willing volunteers **55 years of age and older** with non-profit agencies that need volunteer service. There is no cost for membership. We only require that volunteers and stations provide us with information about volunteer service activities, i.e. volunteer hours, so that we may fulfill our grant requirements.

Goals

- To develop a variety of community service opportunities for older people willing to share their experiences, abilities, and skills for the betterment of the community and themselves.
- To ensure that volunteer assignments are made consistent with the interests, skill and abilities of the RSVP volunteers and the needs of the community.
- To ensure that RSVP volunteers are provided needed orientation, in-service training, individual support, supervision, and recognition for their service.
- To develop local support to supplement available federal resources and to ensure that program expenditures are incurred at the lowest possible cost consistent with the effective operation of the project.



(Goals continued)

- To cooperate with agencies and organizations involved in the fields of aging and volunteerism.
- To develop a sound locally controlled senior volunteer program with continuing volunteer support.
- To provide training and resources to non-profits so that they may become better volunteer managers.

History

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program was created as a Federal Volunteer coordination program in 1969 as an amendment to the Older Americans Act. RSVP is now part of a larger federal organization, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) which is dedicated to the promotion and support of volunteerism in the United States. Since its inception, RSVP has grown to be America's largest volunteer network for people ages 55 and over.

RSVP has been in the Black Hills of South Dakota since 1973 and is currently sponsored by Black Hills State University. (All RSVP programs must be sponsored by an agency that is willing and able to administer its grants.) BHSU RSVP currently has over 500 volunteer members, 100 agency members (stations) and serves eight western South Dakota counties: Butte, Custer, Haakon, Harding, Jackson, Lawrence, Meade and Perkins. Although BHSU receives its guidelines from CNCS, its program is locally run by a small staff located on the BHSU campus in Spearfish, SD.

BHSU RSVP is committed to being the premier volunteer coordination agency in its eight county region by providing non-profit and public agencies with a large pool of willing volunteers, and by providing those willing volunteers with a wide variety of quality volunteer service opportunities.

The Basics

The Volunteer

RSVP volunteers can be anybody age 55 or older who is willing and able to volunteer. Any volunteer that fits this criterion and wants to volunteer within the eight county service area can be a member of BHSU RSVP.

RSVP volunteers serve, without pay, in community assignments at a variety of locations to include libraries, senior centers, chambers of commerce, food banks, and schools. They visit shut-ins, assist in the delivery of meals, and work with children and youth. They act as office workers, tutors and volunteer coordinators. Their service potential is almost limitless.

While BHSU RSVP does not require its volunteers to serve a minimum number of hours per month, we do require that volunteers serve in some volunteer capacity once every three months to keep active as an RSVP volunteer. **Most of our volunteers prefer to serve no longer than two to three hours at a time.**

BHSU RSVP staff will assist volunteers in finding service opportunities that fit their interests and schedules. Volunteers decide where they want to serve and when.

The Station

A volunteer station is a public, private, or government non-profit or proprietary health care organization that accepts the responsibility for assignment and supervision of RSVP volunteers. Each volunteer station must be licensed or otherwise certified, when required, by the appropriate federal, state, or local government. All non-profits must have their non-profit status in good standing with the South Dakota Secretary of State. BHSU RSVP cannot place volunteers in private homes; however, BSHU RSVP volunteers may perform service in private homes of their own volition and/or under the auspices of an active RSVP Station provided that station is in compliance with state and local laws regarding such placement.



(The Station continued)

Volunteer service within proprietary health-care organizations must be limited to those assignments which provide direct and traditional assistance to patients and their families, such as visiting, teaching, counseling and entertaining. Placements in these organizations cannot displace paid employees and must avoid staff or clerical assignments.

Enrollment

The relationship between BHSU RSVP and the volunteer is created via a simple administrative process:

- Any person that is 55 years of age or older who is interested in becoming an RSVP member should contact the BHSU RSVP office and/or fill out an enrollment form. The enrollment form consists of two pages and can be obtained from the RSVP office, or can be downloaded at www.BHSU.edu/RSVP. We encourage all volunteer candidates to fill out the enrollment as completely as possible. Information from the completed form is entered into the RSVP database and is used to match volunteer skills and interests with available jobs.
- The enrollment form **must** be signed by the volunteer for the enrollment to be completed.
- Upon enrollment, new volunteers will be sent a new volunteer packet which will include a BHSU RSVP Volunteer Handbook, RSVP nametag, and instructions for completing time records (time sheets).

Getting Involved

How to get started

Once a volunteer is enrolled and active in the RSVP database, RSVP staff can actively seek volunteer placements for that volunteer. All attempts will be made to match the skills and/or interests of the volunteer with the volunteer opportunities available. The volunteer always reserves the right to refuse any placement opportunity. RSVP staff simply provides each volunteer with a selection of opportunities from which to choose.

Paving the way

While some volunteers prefer contacting our stations on their own, RSVP staff is happy to make those introductions. Let us know what is best for you. We recommend that volunteers “try out” an organization with a few hours of service prior to jumping in with both feet. This way you can determine if the organization is a good fit for you before you commit. Once a referral is made by RSVP, it is the responsibility of the volunteer and the organization to determine if the placement is a good one. It’s the responsibility of each individual organization to screen, orient, and train each volunteer.

Scheduling

Assignment hours vary according to the needs of the agencies. Please be forthright with your scheduling requirements and choose an assignment that suits your lifestyle. Our stations do everything they can to accommodate volunteer scheduling needs, however, they do need to be able to depend on volunteers. Let them know as soon as possible if you have conflicts that will interfere with your ability to fulfill your commitments.

One-time and special events

Many of our stations will request additional volunteers to help with special events that only require a short, one-time commitment. If this sort of opportunity interests you, let the RSVP office know and we will put you on the “Special Events” list. One-time assignments are great for RSVP members who want to contribute, but are unable to commit to regularly scheduled volunteer duties.



Volunteer Responsibilities

RSVP asks that each volunteer observe the following practices when serving any of our stations in a volunteer capacity:

- Please remember to turn in a time sheet each month ; or you may sign a “station” time sheet at the locations at which you volunteer. The station will then submit the time sheet to RSVP.
- Please perform the duties to the best of your ability, observe the days and hours agreed upon, cooperate with staff and other volunteers, and follow the policies set forth by the volunteer station.
- 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 station where you volunteer, and the RSVP office, 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 office informed of any changes in your phone number, your address, and your ability to serve as a volunteer. Also please notify the RSVP office of any problems which may arise at your station.

Reporting hours

To remain an active member of RSVP, each member must report an average of 12 volunteer hours to the RSVP office. Hours should be reported on a monthly basis and should be reported by the **10th** of the month following the month in which the hours were served. To accurately record the hours, volunteers should inform the RSVP office of the number of hours served in each job category at each station.

Volunteers may report their hours via standard mail, e-mail, online time entry or by phone. If you sign-in at your agency on a general sign-in sheet, and that agency sends a copy of those sheets to the RSVP office, no further reporting of these hours is necessary. Detailed instructions for RSVP time entry is sent to every newly enrolled volunteer and is available upon request.

Volunteer Benefits

Insurance

As an enrolled RSVP member, you are covered by personal liability, accident, and excess automobile liability insurance at no cost to you. This insurance does not duplicate benefits payable under Medicare or any other valid and collectible insurance coverage.

In case of an accident, you should call the RSVP office. A claim form will be sent to you to be completed and returned to RSVP. You should include all bills and a statement of Medicare, if you are enrolled in Medicare

Recognition

RSVP sponsors a recognition activity once or twice a year for recognition of active RSVP volunteers. Each new RSVP volunteer is also given a name badge to be worn at the volunteer station.

Newsletter

THE VOLUNTEER, the RSVP newsletter, is mailed to all members and to volunteer stations at least once each quarter. It contains information on service opportunities and helpful information for seniors. A monthly electronic newsletter is also sent to member who provide the RSVP office with a current e-mail address.

Mileage reimbursement

RSVP will provide mileage reimbursement to volunteers within the following guidelines:

- A IRS W-9 must be filled out by the requesting volunteer and returned to the RSVP office prior to requesting reimbursement.
- Travel reimbursement to and from a volunteer location is provided for certain pre-approved volunteer assignments at a rate determined by the RSVP director. The reimbursement rate is based on current budgetary conditions. Eligible transportation is defined as mileage from the volunteer's home to an RSVP station and back.
- Volunteers are asked to carpool when ever feasible. Refusal to carpool among volunteers seeking reimbursement may result in a denial of such reimbursement.



(Reimbursement continued)

- Travel Reimbursement is disallowed when a volunteer could perform the same function at a local station but chooses of his/her own desire to serve at an out-of-town station
- Volunteers must submit their mileage with their monthly hours within 30 days of the incurred mileage to be eligible for reimbursement of that mileage. For example, mileage incurred in April must be reported by May 30th and have corresponding reported service hours.
- By state policy, the minimum reimbursement check that may be issued is \$5.00. A record of reimbursements for amounts less than \$5.00 will be maintained at the RSVP office. Checks will be issued when accumulated reimbursement amounts meet or exceed the \$5.00 minimum for each volunteer.

For more information on reimbursement policies, please call the RSVP office.

Restrictions on Volunteering

RSVP should not be engaged in any of the following activities while representing RSVP:

- Electoral activities or influence legislation as an RSVP representative.
- Any activity that would otherwise be performed by an employee or which would supplant the hiring of an employee.
- Receive compensation for volunteer service
- Compensate the volunteer station or the RSVP grantee or any beneficiaries.
- Give religious instruction, conduct worship or engage in proselytization.

Volunteer Grievances and Review

When there is a dispute between a station and a volunteer, the following actions will take place:

1. The person who has the complaint shall go to the immediate supervisor first.
2. If the issue has not been resolved, the person with the complaint shall then contact RSVP to listen to the issue and determine further action.
3. If the conflict cannot be resolved to each parties favor, the volunteer will be removed from that volunteer station until the issue has been resolved, or until both parties agree to resume the volunteer activity.

Any time there is a discrepancy between a volunteer and a station all measures will be taken to rectify the situation to both parties satisfaction. Incidents will be documented in the individual volunteer's file as well as in the station's file to avoid any future problems.

If any volunteer is uncomfortable, feels unsafe or has concerns regarding their volunteer assignment, that volunteer should notify RSVP and discontinue volunteer services immediately. RSVP will review the station and discontinue all activity at that location if any problem exists. If the situation is corrected and the volunteer is willing to return to the volunteer service, that will be allowed. That volunteer will be under no obligation to serve at that location for that service, even if the situation has been rectified.

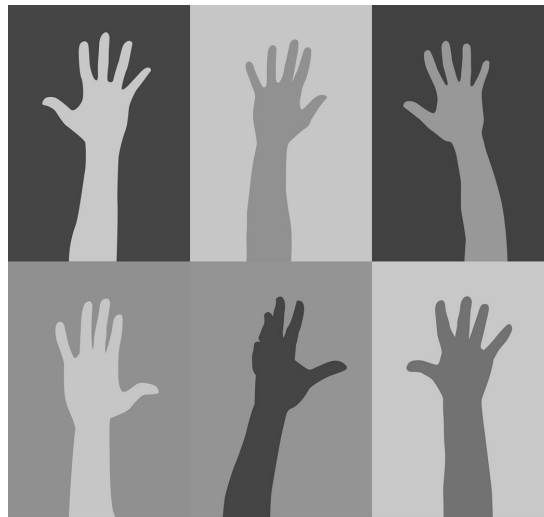
If a station releases a volunteer from volunteer duties, the RSVP volunteer can appeal that decision to the RSVP office. The issue will be investigated by RSVP and a decision will be determined by the RSVP Advisory Council Executive Committee. The determination by that committee will be final. RSVP volunteers are encouraged to contact our office with any questions or concerns at any time.



Special notice to RSVP members

The RSVP database

All active BHSU RSVP Stations are given complete access to the RSVP volunteer database with the exception of potentially sensitive personal information. This data may be used to recruit volunteers, recognized volunteer achievements, and to provide statistical data for grants, and awards. This information may not be used for fundraising from the volunteers themselves. It also may not be sold or in any other way transferred to another organization or group without the express consent of BHSU RSVP. If you suspect that RSVP database information is being used for purposes other than outlined above, please notify the RSVP office immediately.



Black Hills State University

Retired Senior Volunteer Program

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