



AmeriCorps Seniors

Volunteers Make Communities Great!

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK RSVP OF SI

In partnership with

Egyptian Area Agency on Aging

Illinois Department on Aging

Corporation for National and Community Service

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WELCOME!

Welcome to our family of volunteers! We are excited to have you as a volunteer with RSVP of SI. We hope you have many years of rewarding service as a volunteer.



National Service: The Big Picture

RSVP (or Retired Senior Volunteer Program) is part of Senior Corps, America's largest volunteer network for people age 55 and over with more than 300,000 volunteers serving nationwide. Nationwide, 64 million hours of service is donated each year.

RSVP of SI gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Corporation for National and Community Service, Illinois Department on Aging, Egyptian Area Agency on Aging, as well as many local corporate, foundations and individual contributors.

RSVP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Mission of RSVP of SI

RSVP of SI engages volunteers, matching their experiences, talents, and interests to meaningful service. RSVP of SI relies on volunteers like you to carry out its mission of meeting essential needs in our local communities. We offer this handbook to you as a guide for your volunteer experience and as a resource. Please keep it handy and feel free to contact RSVP of SI staff as needed.

RSVP of SI is volunteers! The purpose of RSVP of SI is to enhance the quality of our communities through service at non-profit and public agencies throughout Southern Illinois. RSVP of SI began of humble means in 2017, serving the counties of Alexander, Franklin, Gallatin, Hardin, Jackson, Johnson, Massac, Pope, Pulaski, Saline, Union, and Williamson in southern Illinois.

Who Can Volunteer

Anyone is welcome, although we report the volunteer activities of people age 55 and over to our national sponsor. Everyone has something to give to help make a difference in our communities. For a rewarding experience; call, email, or contact us through our website at www.EgyptianAAA.org, or Facebook.com/EgyptianAAA, or Twitter.com/EgyptianAAA.

Roles & Responsibilities of RSVP of SI and Volunteers

RSVP of SI provides the following to volunteers.

- RSVP of SI Volunteer Handbook and initial orientation
- Suitable and meaningful volunteer assignment(s)
- Assistance in changing or adding a volunteer assignment
- Support in resolving volunteer-related challenges
- Newsletters

- Email/Facebook/Twitter updates
- Regular contact from the RSVP of SI staff
- Annual recognition event
- Opportunity to develop new friendships
- Connection to your community and purpose
- Free supplemental accident and liability insurance

RSVP of SI volunteer agrees to the following.

- Support the goals and policies of RSVP of SI
- Report volunteer hours by the 10th of each month
- Attend training at the volunteer station
- Accept supervision
- Maintain confidentiality
- Be dependable and professional
- Inform RSVP of SI if you have an accident while volunteering
- Maintain minimum auto liability coverage required by state law
- Wear RSVP of SI name tag while volunteering
- Inform the RSVP of SI staff of any conflicts or need for re-assignment or change in volunteer status
- Accept cultural differences and embrace diversity awareness



Where Volunteers Serve

RSVP of SI volunteers can be seen all around the community in any one of many volunteer stations. The opportunities are as varied as the organizations we serve including public schools, faith-based educational centers, community youth centers, senior centers, food pantries, and in homes of senior adults and veterans to name just a few possibilities.

RSVP of SI and each volunteer station sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlines and explains the RSVP of SI mission and service. The MOU defines the relationship between RSVP of SI and the volunteer station regarding volunteers. This document formalizes and strengthens the relationship.

Other National Service Programs

In addition to our volunteer stations, RSVP of SI volunteers may select an assignment with another nationally sponsored service program. These include Foster Grandparent Program in Franklin and Williamson counties and RSVP in Perry County. We work collaboratively with other volunteer programs in order to address many community needs.

BENEFITS OF BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

As an RSVP of SI volunteer, you are part of a large group of citizens with the same interests and goals of working together to improve quality of life, to create positive changes in communities, and to solve problems.

Additional benefits include the following.

- A large variety of volunteer service opportunities, on-going support, and assistance in your volunteer work
- Free supplemental liability insurance coverage while on assignment
- Reimbursement for volunteers age 55+ for mileage & lunch costs
- Annual recognition events and gifts
- RSVP of SI newsletters
- RSVP of SI email, Facebook, and Twitter updates – we include new volunteer opportunities and information of interest to seniors
- Opportunity to share in the fun and camaraderie of RSVP of SI events and parties
- The chance to meet new friends with common interests
- Recognition for 4,000 hours of service with presentation of the President’s Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual volunteer appreciation event



KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL VOLUNTEERING

RSVP of SI requires volunteer stations to provide the following for volunteers.

- An orientation to inform you of our history, mission, grievance procedures, and other policies pertinent to your service at the agency location
- Training and ongoing support
- The name of the volunteer supervisor for you to contact and the contact procedure, should you have questions

RSVP of SI volunteers are sought after because they are responsible, knowledgeable, caring, and wise. As an agency of community volunteers, RSVP of SI strives to encourage new volunteers in the continuation of those traditions.

- *Be dependable:* Every volunteer assignment is important and your service is depended upon by the volunteer station and recipient. Please observe the days and hours to which you agreed. If you cannot avoid being absent or late, please call your volunteer station supervisor.
- *Respect others:* Turn off, or set to vibrate, your cell phone. Do not take calls while in the presence of the students or other recipients. RSVP of SI volunteers work with people of diverse racial, ethnic or economic backgrounds. It is RSVP of SI’s practice to treat people with dignity and respect.
- *Practice confidentiality:* Agency clients are entitled to privacy. Please share your with your friends that you are volunteering, but do not share any information regarding a client’s name or recipient of the volunteer station. It is expected that RSVP of SI volunteers safeguard and protect all confidential information and human dignity at all times.

- *Be well groomed, clean, and appropriately attired* while on volunteer assignment. Conduct and appearance as a volunteer reflects the image of volunteers and RSVP of SI.
- *Promote RSVP of SI while volunteering:* Wear your RSVP of SI button, lapel pin, or T-shirt while volunteering.
- *Support a drug-free, healthful and safe environment:* The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted while volunteering when it does not impair your ability to perform the tasks safely and effectively.
- *Report your hours of volunteer service to RSVP of SI:* Volunteers are required to report service hours by the 10th of each month by mailing the timesheet to the RSVP of SI office, or emailing it to RSVP@egyptianaaa.org

Report to RSVP of SI the number of hours worked, mileage to and from, and approved meals eaten at each agency where you serve, and any hours spent helping someone who needs assistance, such as transportation to a doctor's appointment or homemaking help.

RSVP of SI does not document service hours at political, family, or church events except for telling a story as a community outreach project.

Reporting Volunteer Hours, Mileage & Meals

Volunteer hours, mileage, and approved meals should be recorded daily on the RSVP of SI *Timesheet & Mileage Reimbursement* form, signed by the volunteer and volunteer station supervisor. Timesheets should be submitted by the 10th of the next month to the RSVP of SI office. Reports can be mailed, faxed, scanned and emailed, or hand delivered. See the Office Contact Information on page 11 of this handbook. Note: only volunteers age 55+ are eligible the reimbursement of their mileage lunch costs while on duty.



Volunteer hours make a powerful statement about the value and effectiveness of volunteers to communities. Your attention to reporting your hours served each month assists RSVP of SI in showing our communities that volunteers are to be valued. In addition, RSVP of SI's funding sources requires this information. Finally, your hours are required to keep your free supplemental insurance in effect.

Orientation & Training

RSVP of SI provides volunteers with many opportunities to attend volunteer training. RSVP of SI provides initial orientation, training at volunteer stations, and ongoing training opportunities, to volunteers who are directly serving in RSVP-sponsored programs.

Background Checks

To assist in the process of appropriate volunteer placement, RSVP of SI may occasionally access public criminal records for any registered volunteer at no cost to the volunteer. In addition, volunteer stations may require a complete background check. This is necessary to ensure the safety of our volunteers, children, and older recipients of volunteer service.

No Acceptance of Gifts or Payment from Recipients of Services

Volunteers may not accept gifts or contributions of any kind from persons being served by RSVP of SI. Recipients of service who want to contribute to program should be referred to the RSVP of SI office at (618) 985-8311 or toll-free at 888-895-3306.



Driving and Your Personal Safety

RSVP of SI volunteers who drive their own vehicle to and from volunteer assignments, or serve as a volunteer driver, are required to keep in effect the minimum automobile liability coverage required by Illinois state law.

Note: The supplemental accident and automobile insurance coverage are provided free of charge by RSVP of SI for registered volunteers. The insurance is valid only if you carry the minimum automobile liability coverage required by state law.

Should you have an accident while serving as a volunteer driver, it is required that you contact the RSVP of SI office as soon as possible. To ensure personal safety while performing your volunteer activities, RSVP of SI encourages the following:

- Wear your seat belt and require passengers to wear seat belts at all times
- Obey all traffic laws
- Always have your license with you when driving
- Keep doors locked when driving and while parked
- Avoid driving when tired or taking medication that causes drowsiness

No Cost Supplemental Insurance from RSVP of SI

RSVP of SI provides supplemental insurance coverage to all registered volunteers at no cost to the volunteer. This coverage is effective during your involvement in RSVP-related volunteer service as long as you remain active and reporting service hours to RSVP each month. This policy does not take the place of your private insurance policy. *It is a supplement to your personal insurance*, designed to eliminate out-of-pocket expense for volunteer-related accidents. Supplemental Coverage Includes:

- *Excess Accident:* Covers personal injuries you receive during RSVP-related volunteer activity. Coverage includes medical treatment, hospitalization, and dental and eyeglass repair because of an accident.
- *Accidental Death/Dismemberment:* Covers loss of limb, sight or life because of a RSVP- related volunteer activity. Loss of life benefit will be paid to your designated beneficiary.
- *Personal Liability:* Protects you from personal injury, bodily injury or property damage liability claims arising out of your performance as an RSVP of SI volunteer, and provides for legal defense if necessary.
- *Excess Automobile Liability:* Protects you from bodily injury or property damage claims arising because of using your personal vehicle in connection with RSVP-related volunteer activity. *Note: This coverage does not provide benefits for physical damage to your vehicle.*

Questions and Answers

I travel periodically. Can I still volunteer?

That is the great thing about being an RSVP of SI volunteer. You can plan your personal schedule. Try to plan as much as possible in advance and then let your agency contact know so there is time to make adjustments for your absence.

What if I am scheduled to work a special event and I become ill the night before?

Call the contact person at the agency for whom you are volunteering so other arrangements to cover your shift can be made.

What do I do if I am no longer challenged or enjoying my volunteer placement?

If you are ready for a change, just contact RSVP of SI. The volunteer coordinator will arrange to meet with you to identify a suitable new opportunity.

What do I do if I have a conflict or problem with the agency?

RSVP of SI wants your volunteer service to be satisfying and rewarding. You may wish to register your concern with your volunteer supervisor at the agency at which you are volunteering. Agencies will usually work with their volunteers to resolve differences and misunderstandings. If you believe the problem to be more serious or not resolvable at that level, follow the volunteer station's grievance procedure, and inform RSVP of SI that you have filed a formal grievance. If you so choose, RSVP of SI will intervene on your behalf to assist with a graceful exit and find a new volunteer opportunity for you.



If I have a disability or need a reasonable accommodation can I still volunteer?

Yes, we will take every effort possible to make reasonable accommodations for any volunteer that needs them.

While volunteering, can I help people register to vote or take them to the polls on Election Day?

Not while on duty as a volunteer with RSVP of SI. In addition, our volunteers do not try to influence legislation or engage in political or religious activities while on volunteer duty.

Can I watch classrooms while the teacher is absent?

No, except for a brief minute or two, volunteers are not allowed to be alone in a classroom of children. However, volunteers may work one-on-one and in small groups with children when the teacher is nearby.

Can I take children to the restroom alone?

No, your job as a volunteer is to tutor and mentor children.

Can I take a child or children to entertainment or my home?

No, children may not come to your home or be outside the classroom with you without the teacher or school supervisor present.

VOLUNTEER STATUS

If due to extenuating circumstances, such as illness, taking care of a loved one, traveling, or temporarily residing out of RSVP of SI's service area, you wish to go on inactive status, please contact the RSVP of SI office. If circumstances warrant you considering withdrawing from RSVP of SI, please let us know. Volunteer service will be terminated if you are inactive from volunteer service for 180 consecutive days. If your circumstances change, please call RSVP of SI and we will reinstate your active status.



Volunteer Dismissal Policy

A volunteer may be dismissed for the following reasons:

- Misconduct
- Unsatisfactory performance
- Breach of confidentiality
- Inappropriate behavior
- Disregard of policies and procedures
- Health unacceptable to the point of being a hazard to self or others
- Extensive absences
- Inability to perform assignment or accept supervision
- Suitable assignment not available

Equal Opportunity Policy

RSVP of SI is committed to providing an environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, including discrimination against race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, and sexual orientation. Discrimination in any form will not be tolerated.

If you experience or witness unlawful discrimination or harassment in your volunteer activities, report it immediately to the RSVP of SI Project Director or Executive Director and your volunteer-site supervisor.

Reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities will be made available upon advance notice for meetings, hearings, or conferences.

Grievance Procedure for Volunteers

Any RSVP of SI volunteer who feels aggrieved by an action or RSVP of SI staff decision may appeal for reconsideration by taking the following steps:

- Step 1 Discussion with your RSVP staff supervisor within ten working days of the incident. If the situation is not resolved to your satisfaction, proceed to Step 2.
- Step 2 Discussion with the Executive Director of Egyptian Area Agency on Aging Inc. (EAAA) within ten working days of the completion of Step 1.

- Step 3 Appeal to the EAAA Board of Directors. If this step is taken, the grievance should be put in writing, contain the specifics for dissatisfaction, and be addressed to the EAAA Executive Director, with a copy mailed to the EAAA Board President within ten working days after completion of Step 2. Their addresses will be given to you.
- Step 4 A hearing will be arranged between the volunteer and the EAAA Board of Directors within ten working days after the completion of Step 3.
- Step 5 The EAAA Board of Directors will formulate a recommendation to the Executive Director within five working days after the completion of Step 4.
- Step 6 The RSVP volunteer will be notified, in writing, of the final decision within five working days after the completion of Step 5.

Drug Free Workplace

RSVP of SI is committed to providing drug-free workplaces, free from abuse and misuse of alcohol, illegal drugs, and misuse of prescribed drugs. Anyone who observes illicit use of alcohol and illegal drugs should contact their volunteer station supervisor and RSVP of SI office. In addition, any volunteer that needs help with an addiction should contact the RSVP of SI office by using the Office Contact Information on page 11.

RESOURCES FOR SENIOR ADULTS AND VETERANS

[Benefits Checkup](#)

[Egyptian Area Agency on Aging](#)

[Illinois Aging Services](#)

[Illinois Department on Aging](#)

[Illinois Department of Veteran's Affairs](#)

[Illinois Veterans Care](#)

[Medicare](#)

[National Locator Service](#)

[Social Security](#)

[U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs](#)

[VeteranAid.org](#)



DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Any accusation of misconduct against any person of the corporation will be investigated by RSVP of SI. Reasonable corrective measures will be carried out when complaints are substantiated or are reasonable in order to deter further complaints. However, all sides to any complaint will have an opportunity to present evidence on their behalf. Confidentiality will be maintained as is practical in such matters.

RSVP of SI strongly disapproves of any form of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, involving staff or volunteers. RSVP of SI has a firm belief and EAAA has established policy that all staff and volunteers are entitled to work in an environment that is free of discrimination and sexual harassment. Discrimination and sexual harassment is broadly defined by, but not limited to the following.

OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION

Mailing Address: RSVP of SI
 c/o Egyptian Area Agency on Aging
 200 E. Plaza Dr.
 Carterville, IL 62918

Phone Numbers: (618) 985-8311 & toll-free at 1-888-895-3306

Fax Number: (618) 985-8315

Email Address: RSVP@egyptianaaa.org

Website: www.egyptianaaa.org

Social Media: Facebook.com/EgyptianAAA & Twitter.com/EgyptianAAA

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