



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



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Welcome!

We are excited to have you as an Alpine Area RSVP volunteer for Eagle County! RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) is part of Senior Corps, America's largest network of volunteers aged 55 and older operating in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Since its beginning, RSVP has relied on volunteers like you to carry out its mission of meeting essential needs in local communities.

We present this handbook to you as a guide for your volunteer experience and as a resource of RSVP services. Please use it as a guide to your service and contact your local RSVP staff if you have any questions. We hope you have many years of rewarding service as a RSVP volunteer.

Welcome to our family of RSVP volunteers!

Mission *Alpine Area RSVP enhances our communities by engaging volunteers age 55 and older, matching their experiences, talents and interests to meaningful service.*



Alpine Area RSVP Overview

What is RSVP?

RSVP is volunteers! The purpose of RSVP is to match the skills and interests of volunteers 55 and older to meaningful efforts that improve the quality of their communities. Alpine Area RSVP, is part of a network of RSVPs throughout the world. Volunteers can serve at 501(c)3 non-profit organizations and public agencies throughout Eagle County. The funding source for Alpine Area RSVP is the Corporation for National and Community Service and Northwest Colorado Council of Governments.

Who is a RSVP Volunteer?

Anyone 55 years of age and older is eligible and welcome to volunteer. Everyone has something to give to help make a difference in our community. Call, e-mail or contact us through the RSVP website, and we will help connect you to a rewarding volunteer placement.

RSVP agrees to provide:

- ❖ RSVP Volunteer Handbook
- ❖ Suitable and meaningful volunteer assignment(s)
- ❖ Assistance in adding or changing a volunteer assignment
- ❖ Support in resolving volunteer-related challenges
- ❖ Quarterly newsletters
- ❖ Regular contact from the RSVP staff
- ❖ Annual recognition event
- ❖ Opportunity to develop new friendships
- ❖ Connection to your community
- ❖ Free supplemental accident and liability insurance

A RSVP Volunteer agrees to:

- ❖ Support RSVP's goals and policies
- ❖ Report volunteer hours to RSVP by the 15th day of the next month
- ❖ Attend training at the partner agency sites
- ❖ Accept supervision
- ❖ Maintain confidentiality of clients at all times
- ❖ Be dependable and professional

- ❖ Inform RSVP if you have an accident while volunteering
- ❖ Maintain minimum auto liability coverage required by Colorado state law
- ❖ Inform the RSVP staff of any conflicts or need for re-assignment or change in volunteer status

RSVP volunteers perform a variety of assignments aimed at addressing essential community needs. You can choose the type of impact you wish to have on your community while utilizing your interests, skills, and experience. You can volunteer on a regular basis, during certain times of the year, or just one time for a special event, or a combination of all three.

Volunteers in the RSVP program provide invaluable community service to non-profit and public agencies in Eagle County. You may decide to select an assignment for the new challenge as a learning experience, you may want to continue volunteering in your profession or by sharing skills acquired through a hobby or sport, or by choosing a special population of people to serve. Some volunteers want to help with short-term special events that offer a variety of service experiences without a long-term commitment. Special events include events for Alpine Area RSVP and partner agencies such as rummage sales or health fairs.

Where do RSVP Volunteers Serve?

RSVP volunteers can be seen all around the community in any one of our partner agencies. The opportunities are as varied as the organizations we serve including health care, public safety, social services, tax services and transportation just to name a few possibilities.

Alpine Area RSVP and each RSVP partner agency sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlines and explains the RSVP mission and service. The MOU defines the relationship between RSVP and the agency regarding volunteers and the services they provide to the organization. This document formalizes and strengthens the relationship between the organizations. It is reviewed and renewed every three years.

Benefits of Becoming a RSVP Volunteer

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

Additional benefits include:

- ❖ A large variety of volunteer service opportunities and on-going support and assistance in your volunteer work
- ❖ Free supplemental liability insurance coverage while on assignment
- ❖ Annual recognition events and gift
- ❖ RSVP quarterly newsletters
- ❖ Opportunity to share in the fun and camaraderie of RSVP 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 Volunteer Success

RSVP requires partner agencies to provide the following to new RSVP volunteers:

- ❖ An orientation to inform you of the agency 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 volunteers are sought after because they are responsible, knowledgeable, caring, and wise. As a community of volunteers, RSVP strives to encourage new volunteers in the continuation of these traditions.

- ❖ *Be dependable.* Every volunteer assignment is important; your service is depended upon by the hosting agency. Please observe the days and hours agreed upon. If you cannot avoid being absent or late, please call your volunteer supervisor.
- ❖ *Respect others.* RSVP volunteers work with people of diverse racial, ethnic or economic backgrounds. It is RSVP practice to treat all people with dignity and respect.
- ❖ *Practice confidentiality.* Agency clients are entitled to privacy. Please share with friends and family about your work as a RSVP volunteer, but do not share information regarding a client of the agency. It is expected that RSVP volunteers will safeguard and protect confidential information and human dignity at all times.

- ❖ *Be well groomed, clean, and wear appropriate attire.* Conduct and appearance as a volunteer reflects the image of seniors and RSVP.
- ❖ *Promote RSVP on the volunteer job.* Wear your RSVP button or lapel pin while volunteering.
- ❖ *Support a drug-free, healthy 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.* Volunteers are required to report service hours by the 15th day of the next month (May service hours due by June 15th). All service records need to be signed by each volunteer station that you are reporting hours from each month. You may submit them by mailing them to the RSVP office (PO Box 2308, Silverthorne, CO 80498), faxing (970-468-1208) or emailing (volunteers@nwccog.org).

Report to RSVP the number of hours worked 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. Please give a description of the services provided on each project.

RSVP does not document service hours at political functions, family activities, or at church except for community outreach projects such as a meal kitchen, food pantry, or a housing facility.

Why does RSVP document your service hours?

Volunteer hour statistics make a powerful statement about the value and effectiveness of volunteers 55 years and older to communities. Your attention to reporting your hours served each month assists RSVP in showing our communities that older citizens are to be valued. In addition, RSVP's funding sources require this information and your hours are required to keep your free supplemental insurance in effect.

Volunteer Training

RSVP supports volunteers who want to attend volunteer training opportunities. RSVP provides training to volunteers who are directly serving in RSVP sponsored programs. Additional trainings may be required for volunteers who accept certain volunteer assignments. Please check with the Alpine Area RSVP Program Director for training opportunities.

Background Checks

To assist in the process of appropriate volunteer placement and to ensure the safety of our clients, Alpine Area RSVP will conduct a Colorado Criminal History Record Inquiry (CCHRI) for all registered volunteers at no cost to the volunteer. In addition, the partner agency may require an additional background check for the volunteer assignment of interest to you.

Acceptance of Gifts or Payment for Services

RSVP volunteers may not accept gifts or contributions of any kind from persons being served by a RSVP sponsored program. Those who want to make a contribution should be referred to the Alpine Area RSVP office at 970-465-0295.

Driving and Your Personal Safety

RSVP 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 Colorado state law.

****Note: The supplemental accident and automobile insurance coverage provided free of charge by RSVP to registered volunteers 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 office as soon as possible. You must fill out an accident report that is available on the website or by contacting the RSVP office within one (1) week of the accident. If you are providing transportation on a regular basis please let the RSVP Program Director know that you will need a copy of the report in your orientation packet.

To ensure personal safety while performing your volunteer activities, RSVP 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

RSVP 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 report 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 expenses for volunteer-related accidents.

Supplemental Coverage Includes:

- ❖ *Excess Accident* – Covers personal injuries you receive during RSVP-related volunteer activity. Coverage includes medical treatment, hospitalization, dental and eyeglass repair as a result of an accident.
- ❖ *Accidental Death/Dismemberment* – Covers loss of limb, sight or life as a result 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 volunteer, and provides for legal defense if necessary.
- ❖ *Excess Automobile Liability* – Protects you from bodily injury or property damage claims arising as a result 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.**

Reimbursements and stipends

Some volunteers are eligible to receive reimbursement and/or stipends for their volunteer service. Volunteers who participate in services that contribute to the primary focus area of Health Futures (companionship services, respite services, or transportation) are eligible for mileage reimbursement. This reimbursement is paid at the rate of \$.40 per mile with a 200 mile cap per month (\$80.00 maximum payment). Volunteers who provide medical transportation or home delivered meals will have no monthly cap. When applying for monthly reimbursement and/or stipend you must complete a *Volunteer Service Record* and provide any receipts for expenses incurred. All service records are required to be signed by the Volunteer Site Supervisor. To be reimbursed for any meals you must be asked to work shifts longer than four (4) hours by the Volunteer Site Supervisor. These hours will also need to be

approved by the Alpine Area RSVP Program Director with the completion of the *Shift/Hours Modification* form. To request a copy of the forms or for more information please contact the Program Director or visit the Alpine Area RSVP website (*in development*).

Frequently Asked Questions

1. I travel periodically. Can I still volunteer?

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

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

Call the agency volunteer supervisor for whom you are volunteering so other arrangements to cover your shift can be made.

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

If you are ready for a change, just contact Alpine Area RSVP. The Program Director will work with you to identify a suitable new opportunity. The RSVP program is very flexible with volunteer opportunities. If you are interested in a specific program please contact the Program Director to see if the program qualifies for RSVP.

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

RSVP 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 partner agency's grievance procedure, and also inform RSVP that you have filed a formal grievance. If you so choose, RSVP will intervene on your behalf to assist with a graceful exit and find a new volunteer opportunity for you.

5. What if I am only in Eagle County for part of the year?

As a volunteer for Alpine Area RSVP you can count any hours of service that you provide while in Eagle County. Please contact the Alpine Area RSVP office with the dates you will be available for service each year. When you are not in Eagle County your volunteer hours may be reported

to any other RSVP program that you are a member of. Please check with the RSVP program in your other community to identify any volunteer opportunities.

Volunteer Status

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

RSVP 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

RSVP Equal Opportunity Policy

RSVP 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 Alpine Area RSVP Program Director and your volunteer-site supervisor.

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

RSVP Internal Grievance Procedure for Volunteers

Any RSVP member volunteering directly with RSVP who feels aggrieved by an action or a RSVP staff decision may appeal for reconsideration by taking the following steps:

Step 1. Discussion with your volunteer-site 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 Alpine Area RSVP representative within ten working days of the completion of Step 1.

Step 3. Appeal to the Alpine Area RSVP Advisory Board. If this step is taken, the grievance should be put in writing, contain the specifics for dissatisfaction and be addressed to the Alpine Area RSVP representative, with a copy mailed to the Advisory Board members within ten working days after completion of Step 2.

Step 4. A hearing will be arranged between the volunteer and the RSVP Advisory Board within thirty working days after the completion of Step 3.

Step 5. The Advisory Board will formulate a recommendation to the Alpine Area RSVP representative within ten 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.

RSVP Offices Contact Information

C J Grove
Alpine Area RSVP
249 Warren Avenue
P.O. Box 2308
Silverthorne, Colorado 80498
970-468-0295
volunteers@nwccog.org

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Handbook/Program requirements acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received, read and understand the policies and procedures that are explained in this volunteer handbook. I understand my rights and responsibilities as a RSVP volunteer as well as the rights and responsibilities of the Alpine Area RSVP program. I agree to fully abide by the regulations of the program and to participate willingly in the program.

Volunteer name (please print)

Date

Volunteer signature

* Please return only this sheet to:

Alpine Area RSVP
ATTN: C.J. Grove
249 Warren Avenue • PO Box 2308
Silverthorne, CO 80498
Fax: (970) 468-1208
Email: volunteers@nwccog.org