

# RSVP

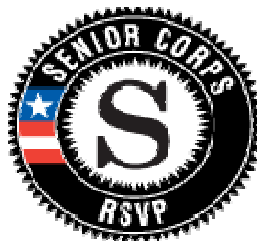
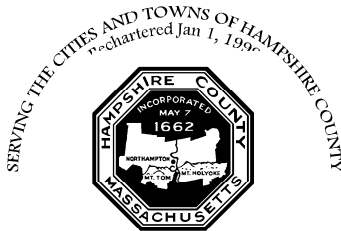
## Of

### Hampshire & Franklin Counties

# *Member Handbook*

RSVP of Hampshire and Franklin Counties  
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# Welcome to RSVP

**Our Mission: Creating strong, connected communities by optimizing the capacity of people age 55+ to work for the common good.**

## What is RSVP?

RSVP (the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) of Hampshire and Franklin counties is a national community service program funded primarily by the Corporation for National and Community Service and locally sponsored by the Hampshire Council of Governments. RSVP connects people age 55 and older with service opportunities in their communities and provides opportunities for life-experienced volunteers to address critical community needs.

RSVP recruits volunteers, assesses their availability and skills, and then matches the interests, skills, and experience of the individual with the best volunteer placement. Over 570 RSVP members are serving over 70 public and non-profit organizations in Hampshire and Franklin counties, including local schools, senior centers, libraries and hospitals. RSVP provides training opportunities and meaningful recognition events to motivate and thank our members.

## Types of service that RSVP members give in Hampshire and Franklin Counties:

Most RSVP members are engaged in work that supports our six key initiative areas:

- **Children's Literacy and Educational Enrichment:** We recruit and place volunteers in elementary school classrooms and after school programs throughout Hampshire and Franklin Counties to serve as reading coaches and provide other needed support to students in local schools and Head Start classrooms. This includes our special Lathrop Enrichment Program, a collaboration among RSVP, the Lathrop Retirement Community and the Easthampton Schools.
- **Elder Health and Wellness:** Teams of RSVP members who volunteer with our Osteoporosis Exercise Program lead weekly bone health and strength-training classes at area Councils on Aging and senior living communities. Classes improve balance, promote senior health and safety, and make information about senior nutrition, medication, and senior health available. Volunteers also assist with blood pressure and flu clinics often sponsored by community Councils on Aging.
- **Elder Nutrition:** In collaboration with Highland Valley Elder Services, WestMass Elder Care, Franklin County Home Care, local Councils on Aging, and the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, RSVP members work to alleviate elder hunger. They accomplish this by preparing hot meals at congregate meal sites, distributing "brown bags" of groceries to seniors, assisting at local food pantries delivering Meals on Wheels, and presenting workshops on healthy cooking and nutrition through RSVP's Healthy Eating Project.

- **Senior Citizen Assistance:** RSVP members serve at area senior centers, leading programs and activities such as computer classes, art classes, musical performances, games, and other workshops and activities. Providing needed assistance to staff, RSVP members serve senior centers as receptionists and provide general clerical help with newsletters, office management, and fundraising. RSVP members serve as SHINE counselors and provide seniors with money management and transportation assistance. They increase socialization with visits to homebound elders and nursing home residents.
- **Non-profit Support:** RSVP members lend their skills and time to local non-profit organizations, helping them to serve more people and increase capacity. Assistance ranges from assisting organizations with statistical analysis, working at a thrift shop, serving on a board of directors, and helping with fund raising events.
- **Experience On Call:** This initiative matches organizations with a team of episodic volunteers who are on-call for one-time projects. Community events, fairs and races, large-scale mailings, toy and book drives, environmental clean up events are just some of the Experience On Call opportunities.

An RSVP member may choose to serve in volunteer positions that fall outside of the key initiative areas. Our goal is to help each RSVP member find a meaningful volunteer placement that matches and fulfills individual goals, interests, skills, and schedule.

### **Become an RSVP Member**

**Persons with 55+ years of life experience are eligible to be an RSVP member.**

1. Contact RSVP and request an application. If you are already volunteering at one of our volunteer stations, you may request an application from your supervisor.
2. Return your completed, signed application to our office.
3. If you are already volunteering at one of our stations, we will alert the station that you have joined RSVP.
4. If you are looking for a new volunteer placement, we will contact you to arrange an in-person or phone interview to discuss your interests, skills, and schedule, and share current volunteer opportunities with you. When you have selected a position or positions that appeal to you, we arrange an interview at the volunteer station, and accompany you to that interview if you desire.
5. Certain volunteer positions require you to complete a criminal records background check. This will be addressed by RSVP or the station before you begin to volunteer.

### **Membership Status**

RSVP members are volunteers who complete an application and are successfully placed in a volunteer position with an RSVP Volunteer Station. There is no restriction based on education, income, or professional experience. Members must maintain an updated membership form and regularly submit volunteer service hours. A member may choose to temporarily inactivate or close his or her membership at any time.

### **Membership Status (continued)**

**Active RSVP members:** Maintaining an updated member information sheet and regularly reporting service hours.

**Inactive RSVP members:** Suspending service and reporting due to illness, travel, or other needs.

**Closed RSVP membership:** An RSVP member's membership may be closed for any of the following conditions:

- ***Reporting fewer than the minimum number of hours of service:*** An RSVP member who reports no hours of service during a year does not meet the minimum requirements for maintaining membership.
- ***Failure to maintain updated member information:*** In order to best serve RSVP members and to remain in compliance with funding agencies, RSVP member information sheets will be updated regularly. An RSVP member who does not respond to repeated requests for an update may have the membership closed.
- ***Member requests to close membership.***

### **Volunteer Separation From Service**

RSVP may separate an RSVP member for cause, including, but not limited to, extensive or unauthorized absences, misconduct, or inability to perform assignments or accept supervision. The Volunteer Station may request the removal of an RSVP member at any time and the RSVP member may withdraw from service at the Volunteer Station or from RSVP at any time. Confidential discussion of individual separations among RSVP staff, Volunteer Station staff, and the RSVP member are used to clarify the reasons, resolve conflicts, or arrange placement with another Volunteer Station.

### **Reporting Hours**

RSVP members report service hours on a monthly basis, on either group or individual time sheets. By tracking volunteer hours, we show the community and our funders the service RSVP members contribute. It is one of the ways we measure RSVP members' impact on the community and helps us recognize our members' commitment and effort. Time sheets provide necessary documentation for transportation reimbursement, and are provided to our insurance company if an accident occurs while an RSVP member is volunteering.

- Time sheets ***must be signed*** by the Station Supervisor.
- Time sheets must be submitted to RSVP no later than the 7<sup>th</sup> of the following month.

### **Benefits for RSVP Volunteers**

**Personalized support:** RSVP provides the support you need to arrange meaningful volunteer positions that match your goals, interests, and schedule. Individuals who are already volunteering at one of our Volunteer Stations may join and supplement their volunteer experience by becoming a member of RSVP. We work with new volunteers to find the right volunteer opportunity.

### **Benefits for RSVP Volunteers (continued)**

RSVP staff conducts personal or phone interviews to evaluate your volunteer goals, suggest volunteer opportunities, and facilitate a first meeting with the Volunteer Station. Some RSVP members create their own community projects and RSVP can help to locate resources and make the contacts needed for the project's success. An RSVP volunteer who wishes to find a new placement for any reason should contact the RSVP staff who will help connect you to another opportunity.

**Professional development:** RSVP works with volunteer stations to create leadership positions for RSVP members, and RSVP members are invited to participate in trainings and workshops that support service, including early childhood development, exercise and nutrition, literacy, mentoring, and more. As RSVP develops in response to changing ideas of volunteerism and retirement, we add more professional opportunities for career and personal development.

**One-time volunteer opportunities and special projects:** RSVP receives many requests from organizations for one-time or short-term volunteer assistance. RSVP also collaborates with local community service organizations to present "days of service" such as Make a Difference Day and environmental clean-up for Earth Day. If you would like to be notified of these special opportunities, please let us know, and we'll put you on our list!

**Recognition:** RSVP is a national service organization with a goal of spreading an ethic of volunteerism and recognizing the service of RSVP members. Active RSVP members receive newsletters and annual updates about their service hours including the impact their service makes on their community. ***RSVP members reporting eighteen (18) or more hours of service annually are invited to recognition events.*** RSVP recommends its members for local, state, and national service awards, and highlights the community contributions of RSVP members through regular news articles and information at community events and forums.

**Group Impact on the Community:** Joining RSVP of Franklin and Hampshire Counties, adds your service to the efforts of more than 570 other people volunteering time and energy to improve and strengthen the community. As a group, we are better able to effect needed change.

**Social Networking:** RSVP-sponsored workshops, training, and recognition events connect you to a network of like-minded peers.

**Insurance:** Each RSVP member is eligible for no-cost personal liability, accident, and excess automobile liability insurance. This insurance provides some help in the event of an accident but is not a substitute for any insurance you may now carry. It only applies while you are performing your assignment as a volunteer in the RSVP program and while on your way to and from your volunteer station. Benefits include up to \$25,000 in excess accident medical coverage, up to \$1,000,000 in personal liability insurance, and up to \$500,000 in excess automobile liability insurance. To be covered under our insurance policy, you must provide us with an emergency contact, and if you drive to and from your volunteer station, provide us with your valid driver's license number and expiration date.

## **Insurance (continued)**

For accident which results in personal injury to you:

- ❖ Call the RSVP office at (413) 584-1300 x8 and request a claim form.
- ❖ Complete the form and return it to our office along with your itemized bills.
- ❖ We will then sign the form and submit it to the insurance company.
- ❖ For a liability claim, you should immediately contact the RSVP office and CIMA (the insurance company), at 216 South Peyton St., Alexandria, VA 22314-2892 (Phone 800-468-4200). If possible, send written notice containing the time, place and circumstances, including the names and addresses of witnesses and the injured.

**Transportation Reimbursement:** RSVP offers members transportation reimbursements to assist with travel costs to and from your volunteer station including mileage and PVTA/FRTA bus and van tickets. Funds for reimbursement are limited. Before requesting reimbursement, we expect that members will reflect on personal need and consider RSVP members who depend on the reimbursement in order to volunteer. In order to request and receive a travel reimbursement, the following policies apply:

1. RSVP members report a current, valid drivers' license number, kept on file with RSVP.
2. RSVP members can only request reimbursement for dates of volunteer service and for actual miles driven to and from their RSVP Volunteer Station, or for bus/van tickets used for rides to and from their RSVP Volunteer Station. Travel expenses incurred while performing volunteer assignments are not reimbursable by RSVP.
3. RSVP members must submit transportation reimbursement requests by the 7<sup>th</sup> of the following month. Reimbursement may be affected by late submissions.
4. Transportation reimbursement requests will be processed only when the corresponding signed time sheets verifying the RSVP member's time and costs have been submitted.
5. RSVP will reimburse its members at a rate of \$0.30 per mile, and \$1.50 per PVTA van ticket, with a maximum of \$30 per month. The rate is subject to change.
6. Transportation reimbursement is not paid for less than one hour of volunteer service.
7. The transportation reimbursement program shall continue as long as there are available funds. The RSVP Director will notify all members who regularly claim transportation reimbursement should funds be reduced or eliminated.

## **RSVP Volunteer Stations**

Volunteer Stations are public agencies, private non-profit organizations, or proprietary health-care agencies or organizations that accept the responsibility for assignment and supervision of RSVP members. Volunteer Stations sign a Memorandum of Understanding with RSVP outlining the responsibilities of each party and Volunteer Stations provide orientation, in-service instruction, and special training for RSVP members as needed. Volunteer Stations also capture the volunteer hours and report them monthly to RSVP. RSVP welcomes conversations with local organizations interested in becoming RSVP Volunteer Stations.

## **RSVP of Hampshire and Franklin Counties Volunteer Stations\***

ACT Now!, Inc.	Leverett Meal Site
Academy at Charlemont	Men's Resource Center for Change
American Red Cross	Northampton Council on Aging
Amherst Senior Center	Northampton Fire Department
Belchertown Council on Aging	Northampton Golden Agers
Belchertown Public Schools	Northampton Survival Center
Bridge Street School	Northampton VA Medical Center
Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School	Northfield Council on Aging
Camp Razzle Dazzle, Great Falls Middle School	Parent Child Development Center
Community Action!	Pelham Library
Cooley Dickinson Hospital	Pioneer Valley Institute at GCC
Cumington Council on Aging	Pioneer Valley Symphony & Chorus
Dakin Humane Society	Rockridge Retirement Home
DIAL/SELF	Safe Passage
Early Learning Center at North Parish	Sanderson Academy
Easthampton Community Center	Shutesbury Elementary School
Easthampton Council on Aging	South Hadley Council on Aging
Easthampton Schools	Southampton Council on Aging
Elder Peer Counseling Program	The Lathrop Community, Easthampton
Family Friends Program of the United ARC	The Lathrop Home
Federal Street School	Treehouse Community at Easthampton
Food Bank of Western Massachusetts	United Way of Hampshire County
Franklin County CDC	USDA Natural Resources Conservation
Franklin County Home Care	Volunteers in Northampton Schools
Frontier Senior Center	Walter Salvo House
Granby Council on Aging	Ware Council on Aging
Greenfield Middle School	Wildwood Elementary School
Greenfield Public Library	Williamsburg Council on Aging
Greenfield Visitor Center	Worthington Council on Aging
Greenfield YMCA	Young at Heart Chorus
Hadley Council on Aging	
Hampshire Care	
Hampshire Educational Collaborative	
Hatfield Council on Aging	
Highland Valley Elder Services	
Hillcrest Elementary School	
Hospice of the Fisher Home	
Hospice Shop of the VNA	

\* We regularly add new volunteer stations, so please contact us for an updated list.

### **RSVP Staff and Contact Information**

Megan Barber, Director	584-1300 ext. 180	mbarber@hampshirecog.org
Pat Sicard, Volunteer Coordinator	584-1300 ext. 183	psicard@hampshirecog.org
Barbara Tessier, Data Entry Clerk	584-1300 ext. 182	btessier@hampshirecog.org
General Messages	584-1300 ext. 8	

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