

● **RSVP** . . . Your invitation to serve.

Volunteers ages 55+ responding with wisdom, experience & commitment to Orange County community needs

RSVP Fact Sheet for Nonprofit Organizations/Government Agencies

What is RSVP?

RSVP (formerly known as the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program) is a free, members-only national service association for people ages 55 years and older. RSVP responds to local community needs through meaningful use of our volunteer's skills and talents.

While a variety of volunteer opportunities are available to our member volunteers, our primary goal is to respond to clearly defined local needs. Based on community assessment and the skills and interests of our volunteers, through 2010 we have chosen two focus areas:

- Public Safety (volunteer police patrols, disaster preparedness/response, neighborhood watch, etc.)
- Nutrition Programs (food pantries, soup kitchens, home-delivered meal programs, etc.)

Our program guidelines require that fifty percent of our volunteers be placed in positions serving these two focus areas.

There are currently 1,250 RSVP members in the county, offering over 190,000 hours of service annually. Volunteers commit to serving in one or more ongoing assignments at RSVP Partner Agency sites. The number of hours served is flexible, the average being four hours served each week.

RSVP member volunteers receive benefits, which include:

- Volunteer insurance
- Transportation reimbursement
- Qualification for the Presidential Service Awards & more

Volunteer Center Orange County (VCOC) is the sponsoring agency of the RSVP program in Orange County. The program is 70% funded by the Corporation for National & Community Service (a federal agency that reports directly to Congress), and 30% funded by VCOC. The program's annual budget is around \$280,000.

The RSVP staff actively recruits Orange County volunteers ages 55 and above on an ongoing basis. We are currently averaging about 20 new members each month. We offer our members personal, one-on-one assistance with finding just the right volunteer position. The hallmark of RSVP is that we provide our members with an ongoing friendly and personal customer service relationship and easy access to meaningful and quality volunteer positions.

The Benefits of Being an RSVP-Affiliated Site

The RSVP benefits add value to your volunteer program. Active members receive:

- Transportation reimbursement for costs to and from their volunteer site
- Supplemental accident medical, personal and auto liability insurance while volunteering
- Qualification for Presidential Service Awards, newsletters, education events & more



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You increase the scope of your recruitment. Our ongoing recruitment efforts include:

- Website & blog
- Presentations to service clubs, churches & other community groups
- Word-of-mouth among our 1,200+ members
- Media coverage
- Newsletter & more

Volunteers ages 55 and older tend to have many of the qualities you may be seeking, such as:

- Make long-term, ongoing commitments
- Daytime availability
- Reliable
- Excellent advocates for your mission
- Bring maturity & life-experience to the volunteer job

What Are the Responsibilities of Being an RSVP Site?

While the Memorandum of Understanding agreement signed by all RSVP-affiliated sites spells out the responsibilities in detail, the primary duties include:

- Provide a volunteer position description for each opening you want us to recruit for.
- Discuss the volunteer position with potential volunteers sent by RSVP and make the final decision on the assignment of volunteers. Refer back to RSVP all volunteers not accepted for volunteer assignment.
- Practice sound volunteer management, including offering RSVP volunteers orientation, training, supervision, periodic evaluation, necessary materials and equipment, provide for their safety and offer ongoing recognition.
- Collect (and validate with staff signature) volunteer hours and requests for transportation reimbursement and submit appropriate report to the RSVP office on a monthly basis.
- Keep RSVP informed of any changes in a volunteer's assignment, job performance, extended absence, death or termination.
- Investigate and report any accidents and injuries involving RSVP volunteers to the RSVP office.
- Promote enrollment in the RSVP program to existing and new aged 55+ volunteers that are recruited from other sources.
- Complete and return all program evaluation materials in a timely fashion (usually requested twice each year).

What Are the Responsibilities of the RSVP Office?

- Recruit, interview, and enroll RSVP volunteers, and refer appropriate potential volunteers.
- Orient and provide ongoing support to RSVP volunteers in program policies and procedures, including reimbursement guidance and volunteer insurance information.
- Provide RSVP orientation to RSVP-affiliated sites.



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- Furnish RSVP volunteers with volunteer insurance (excess accident, personal liability, and automobile coverage as required by program policies). This is **not** primary coverage.
- Reimburse RSVP volunteers for transportation cost between their home and volunteer site in accordance with RSVP policies.
- Maintain regular contact, including periodic visits, to monitor the satisfaction, needs, and performance of both the volunteer and the RSVP-affiliated volunteer site.
- Make workshop in volunteer management available at no cost to the RSVP-affiliated sites at least once per year, and provide volunteer management technical assistance when requested.

How to Enroll Your Organization

1. Contact the RSVP Program Director at (714) 953-5757 x215 to be pre-screened. As our grant limits the number of sites allowed in the program, ***we will only accept sites that meet our current needs.***

If it seems like a good fit for both, you will be asked to complete the following steps:

2. Complete the Partner Registration form on our website: www.volunteercenter.org.
3. Submit volunteer position description for all positions you wish to make available to potential volunteers through the RSVP Program to: RSVP@volunteercenter.org. A position description worksheet is available upon request to assist you with creating an effective description.
4. Contact our office to schedule an RSVP agency site visit.
5. Complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement with RSVP.

We are often asked what makes an organization a good fit for RSVP. We are seeking most the following:

1. **“Meaningful” volunteer opportunities for our members.** While we all need and value volunteers to help with tasks like filing, making copies, and answering telephones, most of our members have very rich life experience and talents that they wish to make full use of while volunteering. RSVP is especially eager to help recruit for positions that are some combination of the following qualities: interesting, impactful, hands-on, leadership.
2. **“Quality” volunteer experiences for our members.** We desire to work only with organizations that value and take great care of the experience of their volunteers. We look for sites that have a designated Volunteer Coordinator, practice ongoing volunteer recognition, conduct periodic volunteer assessments/reviews, create comprehensive volunteer manuals, and are consistently tuned into and quick to respond to their volunteer’s needs.
3. **Organizations that wish to have a two-way partnership with RSVP.** For us, this means we are: responsive to one another’s needs and requests, open to giving and receiving feedback about what is and isn’t working, each accountable for our agreed upon responsibilities, and mutually willing to promote each other’s success.

Please contact us if you have any questions. Thank you for your interest in the RSVP Program.

Contact Us: **RSVP Program** at Volunteer Center Orange County
Beth Bloomfield, RSVP director
(714) 953-5757 x215 or bbloomfield@volunteercenter.org



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