



CENTRAL IOWA
RSVP
Connecting People To Purpose



**Get Connected Today to a Rewarding
Volunteer Experience**

RSVP Volunteer Handbook

Welcome Letter

Welcome! On behalf of all of us at Central Iowa RSVP, I would like to thank you for your interest in volunteering for Central Iowa RSVP.

Central Iowa RSVP's mission is to enhance the lives of adults age 55 and older by connecting them with rewarding volunteer experiences that meet community needs. Our volunteers are our priority, and it is our goal to ensure that you are connected to volunteer experiences that will be meaningful, fulfilling, fun, and impactful. We are only successful because of you.

For over 50 years, RSVP volunteers have been a valuable resource for our organization and our community. By volunteering, you are promoting community involvement, building strong community partnerships and meeting critical needs. We believe that you are our greatest natural resource and through service have the capacity to improve our communities and change lives.

Thank you for volunteering. We are glad you have chosen to be part of the Central Iowa RSVP team!

Laura Severson, Director
Central Iowa RSVP

Organizational Information

Who are RSVP Volunteers?

- Men and women 55 years of age and older who want to use some of their free time to make a difference in their communities
- People who want to serve others (directly or indirectly) by helping in schools, health care agencies, non-profit organizations, and public agencies
- People who desire to use skills developed over a lifetime and tap into their specific passions and interests to meet needs in our communities.

RSVP is a network of adults age 55 and older using their experience and skills to help our communities in Central Iowa. As an RSVP Volunteer, you will be a key contributor in helping solve some of the greatest challenges our communities face today.

History

- Focusing on productive aging, RSVP was launched in 1969 as a pilot project in Staten Island, NY. Today, RSVP is one of the largest volunteer efforts in the nation, mobilizing more than 460,000 “older” Americans through 600 locally sponsored RSVP projects.
- RSVP is administered federally by AmeriCorps and is one of three AmeriCorps Seniors programs that also include Foster Grandparent Program and Senior Companion Program.
- RSVP began in Story County in 1973 and is sponsored locally by the Story City Senior Citizens, Inc. In 2003, the project expanded to include Marshall County and in July 2012, RSVP expanded services to include Hamilton and Webster Counties, becoming Central Iowa RSVP.

Services Provided by Central Iowa RSVP

1. **Volunteer Management for individuals age 55 and over:** RSVP recruits and places volunteers with over 80 public, non-profit, and health care agencies. For these organizations, RSVP staff process volunteer requests, promote volunteer needs, recruit and refer volunteers, and follow up on volunteer placements. RSVP collaborates with many of these agencies to provide volunteer management support in addressing identified priority community needs.
2. **RSVP's Volunteer Management for Emergencies (VME):** The VME program coordinates volunteers mobilized in natural disaster, public health, public safety emergencies, serving Story County. In the event of a disaster/emergency affecting Story County, RSVP volunteers are trained to register and process spontaneous volunteers, staff a non-emergency phone bank, and provide volunteer leadership on-site when community volunteers are mobilized to respond to a disaster or public safety/public health emergency.
3. **Volunteer Driver Transportation Program:** The purpose of the program is to provide Story County residents with safe and reliable transportation services to and from essential services. RSVP recruits, trains, and schedules volunteer drivers to provide rides to individuals in Story County who need transportation, with priority given to residents needing rides to medical appointments, therapies, and treatments within Story County.

Volunteer Placement Guidelines

Volunteer Station: The public, non-profit, and/or health care agencies for which RSVP recruits and places volunteers. Please note that Central Iowa RSVP is one its own Volunteer Stations.

Non-Discrimination: Volunteers cannot be excluded from participation on the grounds of race, color, national origin (including limited English proficiency), sex, age, religion, disability, political affiliation, marital or parental status, military service, or any other legally protected characteristic. **Central Iowa RSVP utilizes adult volunteers of all ages within our organization. However, only those volunteers who are 55 years of age and older can be placed by RSVP with other Volunteer Stations.*

Reasonable Accommodations: When considering placement options, Central Iowa RSVP will not exclude a volunteer from participation and will offer opportunities for all volunteers age 55+ regardless of any of the characteristics listed above. If a volunteer is unable to perform the basic, required tasks of the position, RSVP and the volunteer station will provide reasonable accommodation so all interested people may participate.

Special Limitations for RSVP Volunteers

- **Political Activities:** No RSVP volunteer may be involved in political activities when serving in the capacity of an RSVP volunteer. (This includes electoral activities, voter registration, voter transportation to polls, and efforts to influence legislation.)
- **Religious Activities:** RSVP volunteers shall not give religious instruction, conduct worship service, or engage in proselytization as a part of their duties.
- **Non-Displacement of Employed Workers:** An RSVP volunteer may not perform any service or engage in any activity which would otherwise be performed by an employed worker, or which could supplant the hiring of employed workers or impair existing contracts for service.
- **Non-compensation for Services:** An RSVP volunteer cannot receive a fee for service from service recipients, members of their family, or friends. No person, organization, or agency shall request or receive any compensation for services of RSVP volunteers.
- **Employment Status:** An RSVP volunteer may not be an employee of the volunteer station, the sponsoring organization for RSVP, AmeriCorps, or the Federal government.

Volunteer Safety and Safe Practices

- RSVP volunteers should be fit for the roles they perform, in order to complete their assignments safely. RSVP volunteers should contact RSVP if medical, physical, or other conditions change so that appropriate adjustments can be made with regard to volunteer activities.
- If at any time during your volunteer service/assignment you feel that your safety is being compromised for any reason, contact RSVP staff right away. Your safety is our priority!
- If weather conditions create unsafe travel conditions, you may be contacted by RSVP or the volunteer station staff requesting that you do not get out. If you feel that the conditions are not safe for travel, please notify the volunteer station and/or RSVP to report your absence.

Volunteer Separation

- Volunteers who need to take time off from their volunteer activities for a period of time may become inactive as an RSVP volunteer. We understand this can happen for a variety of reasons and you will be re-activated when volunteering resumes.
- Volunteers may end their volunteer assignment at any time by notifying an RSVP staff person. The RSVP staff will assist the volunteer in locating an alternate volunteer placement, when requested.
- The RSVP Director or an RSVP volunteer station may separate an RSVP volunteer for cause, including, but not limited to, excessive or unauthorized absences, misconduct (as noted in the Conduct section of these guidelines), a breach in confidentiality, etc. All decisions regarding separation will be discussed and agreed upon by the RSVP Director and the RSVP volunteer station supervisor.
- Volunteers will be considered active if they volunteer and report hours to RSVP. If no hours are reported for a period of two consecutive years, the status will be changed to inactive. If you would like to become an active volunteer again, you can reach out to RSVP staff at any time.

Mileage Reimbursement Policy

Reimbursement for mileage is available for registered RSVP volunteers residing in the Central Iowa RSVP Service Area only.

All requests for mileage reimbursement must be accompanied by a signature from the volunteer **and** the volunteer station. Signatures may be submitted via hard copy timesheets, electronic timesheets on the RSVP website, or email. Emails may be sent to any RSVP staff email address from an email address that identifies the sender (volunteer and volunteer station).

- Eligibility requires a valid Iowa driver's license and automobile liability insurance coverage equal or greater than the minimum required by Iowa law.
- Reimbursements are paid quarterly (by check from RSVP) at a rate of .45/mile per round trip.
- A maximum reimbursement of \$45/month may be requested per volunteer (driver).
- Reimbursement is .45/mile for the RSVP Volunteer Driver Transportation Program (Story County) with no cap on the amount that can be requested.
- Reimbursement may be claimed for miles traveled to and from an RSVP initiated volunteer assignment and official project activities (including training and orientation) within Story, Marshall, Hamilton, and Webster Counties for a registered RSVP Volunteer Station.

*Transportation costs incurred while RSVP volunteers are performing their volunteer assignment is the responsibility of the volunteer station. For example, home delivered meal volunteers can be reimbursed by RSVP for miles to and from the meal pick up site only.

**All volunteer reimbursement provisions are subject to change without notice pending the availability of funds to support these benefits.

Volunteer Policies and Procedures/Code of Conduct

When volunteering, an RSVP volunteer must comply with the volunteer station's guidelines/policies for staff and/or volunteers. This includes requirements for training, attendance, dress code and hygiene, language use, or any other guidelines established by the volunteer station. Any concerns regarding the volunteer station should be taken first to the station supervisor. If concerns are not resolved, please contact the RSVP Director.

- 1. Volunteer Registration Form:** All volunteers must complete an application form and fill in all required fields. We collect personal information only for reasonable purposes. Volunteers can also register through the RSVP website (www.rsvpvolunteer.org). All personal information provided by you to Central Iowa RSVP will be kept confidential and will not be shared with any other entity. Electronic signatures will be accepted through the website.
- 2. Orientation and Training:** RSVP staff will ensure that volunteers receive needed orientation and training customized to the volunteer assignment and the individual needs of the volunteer.
- 3. Background Checks:** Please know that many volunteer stations may require you to undergo a background check, depending on the nature of the assignment. You will be required to provide written consent for the agency to perform this check. Volunteers with the RSVP Transportation Program will undergo a background and driving record check prior to participating in the program.
- 4. Hours Reporting:** RSVP staff will provide a variety of options for reporting volunteer hours. For RSVP there is no direct funding tied to volunteer hours, but it is an important part of our accountability to our funders. The service you provide is important! Your hours may be reported through the volunteer station, or by you directly. If reporting them yourself, you may do this by sending an email to any staff email address, by paper, or through the website.
- 5. Appearance/Dress Code:** Dress appropriately for your duties, which will vary depending on the assignment (i.e. gardening vs. helping at an indoor venue). Mostly, we want you to be comfortable!
- 6. Drug & Alcohol Abuse:** The use of illegal drugs or alcohol, or being under the influence of the same, while performing hours of service is strictly prohibited.
- 7. Other Conduct:** Abusive/inappropriate language or profanity will not be tolerated while representing RSVP on a volunteer assignment.
- 8. Attendance/Time Away:** If at any time you are unable to be at a volunteer assignment due to illness or an emergency, please contact the volunteer station staff or the RSVP Coordinator as soon as possible. Please notify the volunteer station staff and the RSVP Coordinator regarding any scheduled absences as far in advance as possible. If you are an episodic volunteer (not part of a regularly scheduled assignment) please let your RSVP Coordinator know (i.e. snowbird, vacation, etc.).
- 9. Confidentiality Agreement:** Some assignments involve working directly with a client of a volunteer station. In many cases, client information is confidential. Depending on the assignment, you may be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement, acknowledging that you agree to refrain from the unauthorized use or disclosure of any proprietary or client information.

- 10. Harassment Policy:** RSVP is committed to maintaining an environment free of unlawful harassment. RSVP prohibits harassment based on sex (including sexual harassment), race, religion, color, national origin, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, or any other legally protected characteristic.
- 11. Supervision:** Volunteers receive supervision appropriate to the task and should be provided with regular opportunities to give and receive feedback.
- 12. Evaluation:** The impact and contribution of volunteers and the volunteer program are continually evaluated to ensure the needs of the organization are being met and to measure the impact volunteer service is having on our communities. You will have the opportunity to complete an annual volunteer impact survey through the RSVP website or a paper copy, if desired.

Volunteer Insurance Policy

(Only provided for RSVP volunteers who are 55 and older)

Central Iowa RSVP provides supplemental insurance provisions (supplements existing insurance policies) to all RSVP volunteers while on assignment for or at a registered RSVP volunteer station. This policy covers injuries arising out of or in the course of the following

- While attending an RSVP assignment-related training and/or recognition event
- While on assignment or during any travel directly to and from the assignment
- Any incidental travel while on the assignment sponsored by RSVP

In case of an accident, auto or otherwise, the RSVP volunteer must notify the RSVP Director as soon as possible following the accident. The volunteer's primary insurance agency must also be notified. Please keep your insurance statement and bills, as they will need to be filed with the RSVP supplemental insurance company.

Please contact the RSVP Business Office at 515-733-4917, 503 Elm Avenue, Story City, IA 50248 immediately if you need to file a claim.

A death benefit beneficiary will be indicated on the initial RSVP application form. During your participation as an RSVP volunteer, you may change your beneficiary anytime by submitting another written request. Requests can be sent to: 503 Elm Avenue, Story City, IA 50248 or emailed to director@rsvpvolunteer.org (must be requested in the body of an email).

**Coverage eligibility requires a valid Iowa driver's license and automobile liability insurance coverage equal to or greater than the minimum required by Iowa law.*

***Accident Insurance coverage includes an accidental death benefit, should an injury from an accident covered by the policy result in the volunteers' death. If there is no named beneficiary or surviving beneficiary, the Covered Person's loss of life benefits will be paid in one sum to the first surviving class of the following: 1. spouse; 2. child/children; 3. mother or father; 4. sisters or brothers; 5. The estate of the covered person.*

Why volunteer?

- Volunteering helps citizens stay active, involved, and connected to their community during semi-retirement or after retirement. You can make a difference!
- Volunteers can meet new people, learn a new skill, share an experience with a friend, and....HAVE FUN!
- Studies show that adults who volunteer actually live longer, healthier, and more fulfilling lives.

The Health Benefits of Volunteering for Older Americans...A Review of Recent Research (Study conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service)

In addition to providing valuable services to individuals and communities, older volunteers are also living active lives through volunteering. A growing body of research shows an association between volunteering and mental and physical health benefits. In particular, older volunteers have lower mortality rates, lower rates of depression, fewer physical limitations, and higher levels of well-being than those in the same demographic who do not volunteer.

Why volunteer with RSVP?

- ✓ *Select from a variety of opportunities – find your passion!*
- ✓ *Your volunteer preferences are our priority*
- ✓ *Stay involved in your community*
- ✓ *Impactful assignments*
- ✓ *Pre-service orientation (group or one-on-one)*
- ✓ *Ongoing support provided (follow-up, communication, redirection)*
- ✓ *Quarterly newsletters*
- ✓ *Web-based information available*
- ✓ *Flexible scheduling*
- ✓ *Social opportunities*
- ✓ *Supplemental Insurance (see details page 7)*
- ✓ *Mileage reimbursement (see details page 8)*
- ✓ *Recognition (the contributions of volunteers are consistently acknowledged with formal and informal methods of recognition)*
- ✓ *Bottom Line...We are here for YOU!*

YOUR Passion. YOUR Time. YOUR Needs. That's what is important!

RSVP Staff Contact Information and Office Locations

Story City Office

Laura Severson, Director

director@rsvpvolunteer.org

Ames Office

Paul Litscher, Volunteer Coordinator – Story County
Kim Anderson, Volunteer Coordinator – Story County

vme@rsvpvolunteer.org
story@rsvpvolunteer.org

Marshalltown Office

Shari Reilly, Assistant Director – Marshall and Story Counties

marshall@rsvpvolunteer.org

Webster City Office and Fort Dodge Office

Becky Koppen, Volunteer Coordinator – Hamilton and Webster Counties

hamweb@rsvpvolunteer.org

STORY COUNTY

503 Elm Avenue (Business Office)

Story City, IA 50248

515-733-4917

888-781-7787 (Toll Free)

(Housed in the Story City Community Center)

205 S. Walnut Avenue

Ames, IA 50010

515-292-8890

(Housed in the 60 Forward Center)

MARSHALL COUNTY

2608 S. 2nd Street

Marshalltown, IA 50158

641-752-0279

(Housed with ISU Extension)

WEBSTER COUNTY

308 Central Avenue

Fort Dodge, IA 50501

515-573-3477

(Housed with Elderbridge Area Agency on Aging)

HAMILTON COUNTY

749 Second Street

Webster City, IA 50595

515-832-2525

(Housed in the Senior Center)

www.rsvpvolunteer.org

Facebook: Central Iowa RSVP