



AmeriCorps Seniors

Serving Northern Cook & Northern DuPage Counties



RSVP Program

Volunteer Handbook



Hands On
SUBURBAN CHICAGO

www.HandsOnSuburbanChicago.org



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Welcome to the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Program of Northern Cook & Northern DuPage Counties. You have joined a program that exists all across the United States.

Volunteers of AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP give their time and talent to local nonprofit agencies and organizations.

This handbook was prepared by the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP staff to help acquaint you with all aspects of our program. We hope you will find this handbook helpful in answering questions.



HandsOn Suburban Chicago is an AmeriCorps Seniors grantee and receives funds through their RSVP program, a national volunteer program for individuals 55 and over.

As a volunteer of AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP, you —

- Help your community
- Help yourself
- Make a difference
- Save money for the organizations you serve

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers determine how many hours a week they can serve.

Volunteers receive accident, personal liability, and excess automobile insurance, as well as community recognition.

Mileage reimbursement is available for specific service opportunities.

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP will track your volunteer service activities and volunteer hours. These hours of service and accomplishments are needed to report to federal, state, municipal and township officials who provide us with funding.

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP

An Overview of the National program

History

In 1965, a pilot project named SERVE (Serve and Enrich Retirement by Volunteer Experience) demonstrated beyond doubt the value of services of older volunteers, and led to creating what is now currently called AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP in 1969.

In 2009, Congress passed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act to bring national service to higher levels of impact, innovation, and effectiveness and placed a strong emphasis on measuring the impact of volunteer service. AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP provides this measurement by requesting each member to complete monthly member activity and hours reports.

Today

Currently, AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP serves 65,000 locations nationally with 296,100 AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers contributing over 60 million hours of service to their communities. AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers continue to make a difference in the lives of those they serve and their communities, while enriching their own lives through service.

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP promotes the engagement of those 55+ as community resources.

As our name implies, **volunteers are responding to an invitation**—a call to serve organizations, people and programs that need their vital assistance.

State and Local Impact

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Means Results

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP focuses on making a tangible difference. National performance measures guide our efforts and ensure your work contributes to real, lasting change in your community.

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Impact in Illinois

- 16** • AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP projects in Illinois
- 9,623** • Illinois residents engaged in these projects
- 2+** • Million hours serving nonprofits, schools, public agencies and faith-based groups across the state

Volunteers do many activities including: providing frail seniors assistance to help them live independently, training to respond to disasters, tutoring or mentoring children and youth, teaching English to immigrants, and helping community organizations expand their reach and impact on community challenges.

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP of Northern Cook and Northern DuPage Counties' Impact Locally

- 692** • AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers serving
- 54** • Member Agencies and Schools served by AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP
- 72,040** • Hours served by AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers
- \$1,937,156** • Dollar Value of Volunteer Service Hours per year returned to the community by AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers (Calculation is based on the Independent Sectors average wage rate of volunteer time.)

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP

An Overview of our Local program

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Office

Our local AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Program serves Northern Cook and Northern DuPage Counties. The AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP office is located at the Forest View Educational Center in Arlington Heights with our sponsor, HandsOn Suburban Chicago.

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP
2121 S. Goebbert Rd.
Arlington Heights, IL 60005-4205
Phone: 847-228-1006
Fax: 847-228-1327
email: rsvp@handsonsuburbanchicago.org

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Program Operation

Our AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP program and sponsoring agency, HandsOn Suburban Chicago, partner with over 100 nonprofit agencies and local schools throughout 44 suburban towns and villages in Northern Cook and Northern DuPage Counties. AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP staff does outreach events with our partners, community centers, and other recruitment fair activities in order to highlight our partner sites' volunteer opportunities.

In addition, our website www.handsonsuburbanchicago.org provides a searchable list of current volunteer opportunities. Once a volunteer has been matched with an opportunity, an AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP membership application is completed. The application can be found on the HandsOn Suburban Chicago website or at any of AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP's partner sites.

An Overview of our Local program - *continued*

Where Can You Volunteer?

Our Volunteer Sites are public agencies, schools, non-profit organizations, or proprietary healthcare agencies that accept assignment and supervision of AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers. These sites agree to track hours and provide proper training, supervision and conform to safety and accessibility regulations necessary to protect the volunteers.

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers may choose from hundreds of volunteer opportunities posted by these sites located in northern Cook and northern DuPage counties. These opportunities are updated regularly and can be found on our website: www.HandsOnSuburbanChicago.org.

How to Protect Yourself When Volunteering During Covid:

- Wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth to help protect yourself and others.
- Stay 6 feet apart from others who don't live with you.
- Avoid crowds.
- Avoid poorly ventilated indoor spaces.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.
- Follow all safety protocols established by the volunteer site.



AmeriCorps
Seniors

Benefits to Volunteers

Volunteer Recognition

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP recognizes the important contribution of each volunteer. Our policy is to make the public aware of AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteer service through on-going publicity programs. Active volunteers are recognized yearly in a variety of ways.

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Communications

- News for You, a quarterly newsletter provides news about AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP, the community, Volunteer Sites and other information of interest.
- Spotlight on Service, a bi-monthly email highlights our volunteers and their role in helping our community partners and the people they serve.

Reimbursement —Volunteer Expenses

When funding is available, AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers may be reimbursed for mileage driven in their own cars while performing specific volunteer assignments.

Volunteer Opportunities

You may contact the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Manager to assist you with finding a new or additional volunteer position.

Supplemental Volunteer Insurance

In order to minimize risks associated with volunteering, AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP provides all active members with three types of supplemental insurance protection. This insurance is available only when volunteering at a AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Volunteer Site, and only to active AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers. All insurance provided is secondary to your current primary provider. The three insurances policies are:

Supplemental Volunteer Insurance *-continued*

• **Accident Insurance**

Under this policy, all AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers are covered for personal injury occurring during their volunteer assignments. This insurance applies while traveling directly to and from the assignments and while participating in volunteer assignments. Initial medical expenses must be incurred within 60 days of the accident. This coverage is in excess of Medicare and any other insurance.

• **Personal Liability Insurance**

All registered AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers are provided additional liability insurance for bodily injury or property damage arising out of the performance of your duties during your volunteer assignment. This non-contributing coverage is in excess of any other insurance.

Principle Exclusions to Personal Liability Insurance:

- * Injury or damage arising out of the use of an automobile, aircraft, or watercraft.
- * Personal injury resulting from assault and battery committed by or at the direction of the member.
- * Damage to property in the care, custody, or control of the member.

• **Excess Auto Liability**

This coverage provides protection for you as a registered volunteer driver while performing your duties. This coverage protects you for bodily injury or property damage claims arising out of the operation of your own vehicle during your volunteer assignment. This insurance is in excess of any amount equal to the applicable limits of liability of any other insurance collected by the insured. Exclusions to Excess Automobile Liability Insurance: This insurance does not apply to damage to the volunteer's automobile.

Filing A Claim

In case of an accident, the volunteer or his/her representative should call the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP office at 847-228-1006. A claim form will be sent to the member to complete.

Volunteer Member Policies

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Application must be completed in full.

Volunteers must complete and submit a report of volunteer hours monthly, but no less than every 90 days, to remain active with AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP. Reporting of volunteer hours is a requirement for compliance with our funding.

Arrangements for recording volunteer hours vary among sites. Be sure to check what is required in terms of signing in when you begin your assignment. Travel time to and from your site should not be counted.

If you are unable to continue to serve for any length of time, contact the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP office. It is policy that volunteers be placed on an inactive list if you have not submitted hours to the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP office after 90 days.

Unless you decline, you may be interviewed or photographed by staff or the press while doing your volunteer service. Please mention that you are a volunteer of the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP program.

As a AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteer, if you feel your volunteer rights have been violated or you are dissatisfied with an aspect of your volunteer assignment, discuss it first with your supervisor. If still dissatisfied, please contact the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP office.

Volunteer Member Policies *-continued*

Purpose For Submitting Hours

AmeriCorps Seniors, our major funder, requires the RSVP Program to track all time spent volunteering as a means of assessing impact. The AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP office also uses this information to share with funders that require statistics and quantitative data. Internally, it helps us determine who is an active volunteer, and for insurance purposes, it can verify your volunteer status if you file an insurance claim.

Procedure for Submitting Volunteer Hours

Either the site or the volunteer will be responsible to submit hours monthly. Please check with your supervisor for clarification on this step. The AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteer and Volunteer Site representative must also sign the hours report. There are several ways to report your volunteer hours.

- Mailing or faxing the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Monthly Time Sheet
- Email AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP with the dates, hours, and volunteer activity
- Report online at www.HandsOnSuburbanChicago.org/RSVP —call for instructions
- Phone call to AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP with report of hours

Prohibited Member Activities

Due to federal grant guidelines, AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers cannot report volunteer hours for the following activities:

- Religious instruction, conducting worship services, or proselytization.
- Electoral activities, voter registration, transportation to polls, or political activities.

As a AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteer you may not:

- Engage in activities that displace paid workers.
- Accept money or donations from your service recipients or relatives and friends of service recipients.

Volunteer Member Policies -continued

Responsibilities of the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Volunteer

When accepting a volunteer assignment you are responsible:

- To attend orientations and trainings held by your site.
- To record hours so that they can be submitted to AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP.
- To call your site with as much notice as possible, if you are unable to attend as expected.
- To notify your site if you expect to be away from your assignment for an extended period of time.
- To report all accidents. Remember AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP carries supplementary insurance and a claim can be filed on your behalf.
- To call AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP if you have any problem regarding your assignment that cannot be resolved with your site supervisor, or would like to change or add to your assignment.
- To call AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP if you have a change of phone, address or email.

Member Separation and Appeal Process

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP or the Site Coordinator may separate a volunteer from the program for cause, including, but not limited to, extensive or unauthorized absences, misconduct, inability to perform assignments, or inability to accept supervision. Separation may also be based on termination of the assignment or when the assignment is no longer meaningful to the member.

Quotes from Our Volunteers

Geraldine Spinnato
Sheila Ray Senior Center,
Elk Grove Village

“Volunteering gives me a sense of well being.”

“Through volunteering, I have had the joy of making a difference in a student’s school year by helping them deal with a difficult issue, or improve their reading or writing skills. The Intergenerational Pen Pal program allows me to do the same thing by exchanging thoughts and ideas in writing. Children haven’t changed. They are open to adults who care about them and return whatever support you give them 10 fold.”

Janet Isaacman
Intergenerational Pen Pal
Program, Palatine and
Wheeling schools

Jeanette Domek
Arlington Heights
Senior Center,
Arlington Heights

“Being able to give back to my community... The smile on people’s faces... The satisfaction I get from being helpful...”
 make my volunteer experience meaningful.

“Seeing faces light up when I arrive to tutor. The smiles, stories, and hugs I share with the first and second graders are priceless.”

Maureen Clark
Plainfield Grade School,
Des Plaines

Volunteer Activities

AARP Tax Aide	Farm Maintenance	Pen Pal
Activity Assistant	File Clerk	Reassurance Phone Calls
Administrative Assistant	Financial Accounting	Reception
Adult Literacy Tutor	Flower Shop	Red Tape Cutters
Advisory Council Member	Food Packer	Resale/Thrift Shop Worker
Airport Information Booth Aide	Food Pantry Worker	Resident Activities
Arts and Crafters	Friendly Visitor	Resident Services
Blood Drive Host	Front Desk Reception	Resource Center Specialist
Board Member	Fundraising (Development)	Respite Care
Café Hostess	Gardener	Rules of Road Instructor
Career Coach	Gift Shop	Senior Health Insurance Program Advisor
Citizenship Class Aide	Grant Writer	Sales and Marketing
Child Care Aide	Greeter	School Office Assistant
Clerical	Grocery Shopper	Seamstress
Community Event Presentations	Handyman	Senior Outreach
Computer Lab Instructor	Historic Interpretation	Service Learning
Congregate Meal Cashier & Meal Preparation	Holiday Events Participant	Singer
Conservation	Home Repair Worker	Skills-based Volunteer
Crisis/Hot Line Phone Calls	Homeless Shelter Worker	Speaker's Bureau
Current Event Leader	Hospice Volunteer	Special Event Participant
Data Base Design	Hospital Volunteer	Tax Preparer
Data Entry	Human Resources	Telephone Caller for Homebound
Disabled Services	Interpreter/Translator	Trainer
Driver - Meals on Wheels Program	Intake Coordinator	Tutor - After School Program
Driver - Transportation Service	Knitting/Crocheting	Tutor - Elementary School
Employment Counselor	Leadership Volunteer	Tutor—Lunch Buddy
Entertainer	Mailings/Office Support	Wheelchair Escort
Environment Education	Marketing Advisor	Woodshop Supervisor
Escorted Transportation Driver	Medicare Aide	
	Mentor	
	Money Manager	
	Museum Assistant	
	Musician	
	Newsletter Writer	
	Office Administrator	
	Ombudsman Volunteer	
	Paint-a-thon Volunteer	

**HandsOn Suburban Chicago's
AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Program
Funding provided by:**



**AmeriCorps
Seniors**



HandsOn Suburban Chicago
Elk Grove Township
Palatine Township
Schaumburg Township
Wheeling Township

In Kind Donors:
HandsOn Suburban Chicago
Township High School District 214

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