



AmeriCorps Seniors

**RETIRED & SENIOR VOLUNTEER
PROGRAM (RSVP)
VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**



**AmeriCorps
Seniors**

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

Serving Becker, Clearwater, Hubbard, Mahnomon,
Otter Tail, Todd, Wadena, and Wilkin
Counties in Minnesota

Welcome!

You have acquired a lifetime of talent, experience, skills, and knowledge. As a volunteer, you can continue to share these assets and have a valuable impact in your community.

The Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) can help you make volunteering a more meaningful experience by offering you information, support, and guidance. The service you choose will be a significant contribution to the Central Minnesota region.

RSVP looks forward to a long and rewarding relationship with you. This handbook has been written to acquaint you with RSVP and to answer basic questions about the program.

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AmeriCorps Seniors

What is RSVP?

The Retired & Senior Volunteer Program is an organization whose members provide valuable contributions to their communities by the services they perform. Established in 1971 and now one of the largest senior volunteer organizations in the nation, AmeriCorps Seniors engages approximately 140,000 people age 55 and older in a diverse range of volunteer activities.

Volunteers provide independent living services, tutor and mentor children, assist victims of natural disasters, help at food shelves, lead senior exercise classes, and serve their communities in many other ways. RSVP volunteers choose how, where, and how often they want to serve, with commitments ranging from a few hours to 40 hours per week.

Minnesota statistics for 2022 indicate there were 10,072 seniors volunteering 1.13 million hours in a wide variety of community projects. In MAHUBE-OTWA's eight-county area, as of 2024, there are currently 63 station sites and 642 volunteers.

RSVP receives federal funding from AmeriCorps Seniors.

www.mahube.org

Who Can Belong to RSVP?

The RSVP Program provides an opportunity for volunteers to put their skills, talents, and life experiences into motion for others – and benefit our Minnesota communities in the process. Sharing the skills, they have spent years developing, RSVP volunteers put those skills into practice to improve the lives of community members throughout the state. Whether building homes for the needy, preparing income tax reports for community residents, or mentoring a child, RSVP volunteers strengthen our communities.

To qualify as an RSVP volunteer:

- You must be 55 years of age or older and in good general health
- Be flexible and available with service activity schedule
- Have dependable transportation available and be willing to travel in the service area
- Have compassion, patience, flexibility, and respect for others
- Work well with diverse individuals, families, groups, and organizations

No person may be excluded from membership or participation in the activities or the benefits or RSVP on the basis of race, sex, ethnicity, handicap, sexual preference, or national origin.

Getting Started

Anyone interested in joining RSVP is encouraged to contact one of our RSVP offices:

MAHUBE-OTWA, Detroit Lakes Office

Cynthia McDonough, RSVP Director

1125 West River Road
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
218-847-1385 x140

MAHUBE-OTWA, Wadena Office

Sheila Stave, RSVP Coordinator

311 Jefferson Street N
Wadena, MN 56482
218-632-3600

RSVP volunteers choose to volunteer at various stations throughout our communities. Some stations, which benefit from RSVP volunteers, are Area Food Shelves, Meals on Wheels, Museums, Libraries, Hospitals, Public Health Departments, and Schools. If volunteers are not sure what type of location they would like, the RSVP Coordinator can work with them to match their talents with an appropriate work site.

A complete listing of stations is available at both the Detroit Lakes and Wadena office locations.

A station supervisor will meet with each volunteer to discuss available volunteer positions, training (if necessary), and station expectations. Occasionally, a volunteer might wish to change stations or take on additional volunteer duties, in which case additional training can be arranged as needed for volunteers.

Benefits of RSVP

- Personalized Assistance

The RSVP staff will work with you to identify a volunteer opportunity that will meet your individual needs. We will match your skills, interests, schedule, and geographical availability with a volunteer position that is right for you. We will continue to be available to provide ongoing information and support as your volunteer needs evolve.

- Supplemental Insurance

As an RSVP member you will be covered by supplemental insurance when you volunteer. Coverage includes accident medical, volunteer liability, and automobile liability in excess of any other valid and collectible insurance coverage.

- Be Counted as Part of a National Movement

Adults 55 years and older are giving thousands of hours daily to positively impact the communities in which they live. Your hours will be counted with those of your peers to demonstrate to policy makers and the community the impact of senior volunteerism on local and national levels. You will help send the message that older adults are making meaningful contributions, solving problems, and bringing our communities together.

- Volunteer Recognition

RSVP celebrates your accomplishments and honors the work that you do. This takes a variety of forms, including special events, trainings, and opportunities offered to RSVP members.

- Travel Reimbursement

We can reimburse a portion of your volunteer related out-of-pocket transportation expense. Your reimbursements are not subject to any tax or charge and are not treated as wages or compensation for the purposes of unemployment insurance, worker's compensation, temporary disability, retirement, public assistance, or similar benefit payments or minimum wage laws. Reimbursements are not subject to garnishment, do not reduce or eliminate the level of or eligibility for assistance or services you may be receiving under any governmental program.

Insurance

Volunteers who use their own private car to drive to and from their station are provided with **excess** auto and volunteer liability. The RSVP Volunteer Registration Form **must** be signed and dated by the volunteer and a member of the RSVP staff. This is to confirm that the volunteer has at least the “minimum” of auto insurance coverage and a valid driver’s license. This form will be filed and kept within the RSVP office. Per our Federal Regulations, beneficiary information **must** be filled out in the entirety.

Auto accidents and/or inquiries occurring within the scope of volunteer service should be reported immediately to RSVP staff at either the Detroit Lakes or Wadena office.

A copy of the Volunteer Insurance policy is available at each station or by contacting one of our offices.

Orientation

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteers work most successfully when they have a clear understanding of the RSVP program and their roles and responsibilities as volunteers. It is our duty as RSVP staff to provide you with the information you need to be an RSVP volunteer. This Handbook serves as your orientation to RSVP policies and procedures, and you may feel free to contact either of the RSVP Coordinators with any questions or concerns.

Station Orientation

At the beginning of a volunteer assignment, you will be introduced to the procedures of that assignment by the Station Representative. When volunteering you must follow the Station’s policies and guidelines for staff and/or volunteers. Any concerns regarding the policies and guidelines should be taken to the Station Representative. If concerns are not resolved, please contact the RSVP Coordinator.

Station Tips

Details you will want to know about your Station:

- Learn the history of the Station
- Understand the mission and purpose of the Station
- Know and understand your role at the Station
- Know what change you are working to create or the problem you are working to address
- Know the types of clients the Station serves
- Know your supervisor and the Station staff you work with. They will answer your questions and address any concerns you may have.
- Know what policies and procedures you are subject to as a volunteer (e.g., attendance, dress code, the check-in procedure for your Station, etc.)
- Understand what you are and are not entitled to while providing service to the Station
- Learn the little things such as the location of the restrooms, coat racks, workspace, parking area, the lounge or lunch area, etc.

Record Keeping

Record keeping of the RSVP Monthly Timesheet is extremely important to ensure continued funding of the program. The Monthly Timesheet enables staff to keep tally of all the volunteer hours and record requests for mileage reimbursements. You may start recording your volunteer time from the time you leave your home until the time you return.

Complete instructions can be found in the Forms and Procedures information located on pages 12-19 of this handbook.

The RSVP Monthly Timesheet should be mailed, emailed or hand-delivered to the Detroit Lakes or Wadena office by the 10th of each month for the previous month's hours and mileage. Monthly Timesheets are to be signed by the Station Representative and initialed by the volunteer.

Mileage

- Volunteers may receive assistance with the cost of transportation to and from their volunteer assignment. Only the volunteer driver may request mileage.
- In order for reimbursements to be mailed in a timely fashion, the completed RSVP Monthly Timesheet **must** be returned to the Detroit Lakes or Wadena office by the 10th of each month. The Station Supervisor must sign these forms also. The individual green timesheets must be signed and the white timesheets must be initialed.
- Timesheet forms can be found in the Forms and Procedures section on pages 12-19 of this Handbook.
- Timesheets can be accepted in hard copy or emailed by station supervisor.

Confidentiality

Volunteers should be aware that certain clients and agency information is confidential. Names, telephone numbers, or any other information which might identify a client **must never** be released to others outside the specific RSVP station or the RSVP staff.

Breach of confidentiality may consist of:

- Talking about a client to:
 - Family members
 - Friends
- Talking about a client:
 - In an inappropriate place
 - To his/her family in an inappropriate place

Confidentiality is the cornerstone of a trusting relationship between volunteers, clients, Stations, and RSVP. Some volunteer opportunities involve knowing sensitive information about the individuals being served. For your own safety, it is also important to only release personal details to RSVP and appropriate Station staff.

Commitment

A schedule enables the volunteer station to prepare appropriate work for volunteers. A volunteer who is ill or unavailable should notify the station as soon as possible. If you are no longer available to serve as an RSVP Volunteer, please notify the Station and the Detroit Lakes or Wadena RSVP office.

Volunteer Separation

RSVP Policy states that we must designate any volunteer who is absent from service for twelve consecutive months as being inactive, but we are always happy to re-instate a volunteer whenever the volunteer becomes active again.

Some reasons for being inactive include illnesses, moving, or traveling for lengthy periods of time. If you will be unable to volunteer for a period of time, please inform the RSVP office and the Station Representative.

RSVP may separate a volunteer if there is “just cause” and in accordance with approved policies. Some reasons for this may include: unauthorized absences, misconduct, and the inability to perform assignments or accept supervision. Contacting an RSVP Coordinator or the RSVP Director should be the first step taken by a volunteer who has concerns regarding an assignment. Should the situation remain unresolved, the volunteer may contact the Executive Director of MAHUBE-OTWA.

The RSVP Station has the authority to ask for removal of the volunteer with due cause.

Conduct

RSVP volunteers should conduct themselves in accordance with the volunteer station guidelines. This may include requirements for training, attendance, and dress codes. Federal guidelines mandate that RSVP volunteers shall NOT act in a way which results in RSVP being identified with political activities. Volunteers do not give religious instruction, conduct worship service, or engage in proselytization as part of their duties.

Drugs and Alcohol

The use of illegal drugs or alcohol, or being under the influence of the same, while performing hours of service is strictly prohibited and is cause for termination of all volunteer placements.

Sexual Harassment and Workplace Violence

RSVP and the Stations are committed to providing a safe work environment as well as an environment in which people are treated with dignity, decency, and respect. You are expected to exhibit these commitments while performing your hours of service. Failure to do so is cause for termination of all volunteer placements.



About MAHUBE-OTWA:

Two Community Action agencies merged to form a single organization designed to maximize resources in central Minnesota. These were

- **Mahube (Mahnomen, Hubbard, Becker Counties) Community Council**
- **Otter Tail-Wadena Community Action Council**

Both were established in 1965 to fight poverty and be advocates for low-income and elderly people, promoting self-sufficiency, family stability, and community revitalization.

In December 2011, Mahube Community Council and Otter Tail-Wadena Community Action Council announced that they had entered conversations to explore creating one Community Action Agency to serve the five counties of Becker, Hubbard, Mahnomen, Otter Tail and Wadena counties. The Agency was designed as a single organization to deliver effective, quality services and to maximize resources in the five-county area while working with many community partners.

The Fergus Falls and Wadena offices opened in July 2012 to provide better services to the people in these areas. The organization is now called MAHUBE-OTWA to represent the counties served (Mahnomen, Hubbard, Becker, Ottertail and Wadena). Offices remain in Detroit Lakes, Mahnomen, and Park Rapids.

MAHUBE-OTWA has been awarded a grant for RSVP in the counties of Becker, Clearwater, Hubbard, Mahnomen, Otter Tail, Todd, Wadena and Wilkin Counties.

Forms and Procedures

RSVP Volunteer Registration Form, p. 1
RSVP Volunteer Registration Form, p. 2

RSVP Timesheet/Reimbursement Form, p. 1
RSVP Timesheet/Reimbursement Form, p. 2

RSVP Station Timesheet

Grievance Procedure



**AmeriCorps
Seniors**

**Retired and Senior Volunteer Program
Volunteer Registration Form**

*“Serving Becker, Clearwater, Hubbard, Mahnomon, Otter Tail,
Todd, Wadena and Wilkin Counties in Minnesota.”*

First Name:		Last Name:	
Primary Address:			
City:		State:	Zip Code:
County:		Email Address:	
Home Phone Number: - -		Cell Phone Number: - -	
Date of Birth: / /		Sex: <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	
Education Level: <input type="checkbox"/> High School Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> GED <input type="checkbox"/> Technical <input type="checkbox"/> College Degree			
Ethnicity: <input type="checkbox"/> Not Hispanic/Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino			
Racial Group:			
<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaskan Native		<input type="checkbox"/> Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Pacific Islander		<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic	
<input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American		<input type="checkbox"/> White	
<input type="checkbox"/> Two or More Races			
Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ community? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Are you a Veteran? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Did you serve in the US Armed Forces? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Do you have family members that served in the US Armed Forces? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Do you have a physical limitation or medical condition that would affect your ability to volunteer at certain sites? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (If yes, please indicate) _____ _____			
Please enter information to receive FREE insurance and/or mileage benefits:			
Social Security Number: (necessary only if you are requesting mileage reimbursement) ____ - ____ - ____			
Medical Insurance Coverage: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Do you have your own vehicle? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Valid Driver's License? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Expiration Date _____	
Driver's License Number:			
Auto Insurance Company:			
Beneficiary for RSVP Accident Insurance: (Please write a name or the word "Estate")			
Beneficiary:		Relationship:	

- I understand that I am a 'volunteer' of MAHUBE-OTWA Community Action Partnership, Inc. Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), and not an employee of the agency.
- By signing this form, I hereby give my permission to RSVP to use my name and/or photograph in news stories, newsletters, etc. to help RSVP in promoting this program.

Signature of Volunteer Date

Signature of RSVP Representative Date

How did you hear about RSVP? <input type="checkbox"/> Friend <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper/Radio/TV <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
Current Volunteer Assignments: (please list) _____		
Are you interested in new and/or additional volunteer opportunities? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Career/Professional History: _____		
Using this list below, please check your skills and interests as they apply to RSVP Volunteer Site Placement:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Afterschool Programs (games, crafts)	<input type="checkbox"/> Headstart Programs (pre-schools)	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading to Children
<input type="checkbox"/> Answering Phones	<input type="checkbox"/> History/Culture/Arts	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading to Visually Impaired
<input type="checkbox"/> Cards/Games (seniors)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hospice	<input type="checkbox"/> Respite Care
<input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry/Woodworking	<input type="checkbox"/> Hospital	<input type="checkbox"/> Sewing/Quilting
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer/Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Knitting/Crocheting	<input type="checkbox"/> Shopping/Errand Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Crafts	<input type="checkbox"/> Library Aide	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Projects
<input type="checkbox"/> Deliver Prepared Meals (Meals On Wheels)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mailings Preparation	<input type="checkbox"/> Tax Preparation
<input type="checkbox"/> Driving/Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/> Thrift Store
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment/Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum Aide	<input type="checkbox"/> Tutoring Adults
<input type="checkbox"/> Environment/Nature	<input type="checkbox"/> Nursing Home	<input type="checkbox"/> Veterans' Services (transportation, respite)
<input type="checkbox"/> Escort for Medical Appt.	<input type="checkbox"/> Office Duties (data entry, copying, filing)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exercise	<input type="checkbox"/> Parks/Wildlife Refuges	
<input type="checkbox"/> Food Shelf/Food Distribution	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone Calling	
<input type="checkbox"/> Friendly Visitation/Companion	<input type="checkbox"/> Photography	Days/Hours you are available:
<input type="checkbox"/> Gardening	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning/Organization (special events and projects)	Days: _____ Hours: _____
Emergency Contact Information:		
Name: _____ Phone Number: _____		
Are you a seasonal resident of the area? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If yes, what months? _____		
Housing survey: <input type="checkbox"/> Own free of mortgage <input type="checkbox"/> Own with mortgage <input type="checkbox"/> Rent <input type="checkbox"/> Occupy w/o payment		
Income survey: <input type="checkbox"/> \$24,999 or less <input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000-39,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000-59,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000-74,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$75,000-99,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000-149,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$150,000 or more <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know		

- The volunteer handbook and grievance procedure can be accessed via MAHUBE-OTWA website at www.mahube.org or by requesting a paper copy. Would you like a paper copy of our Volunteer Handbook? Yes or No



Questions: Contact Cynthia McDonough,
218-847-1385 ext 140,
cmcdonough@mahube.org
or Sheila Stave, 218-632-3600 ext 229,
ssstave@mahube.org

Detroit Lakes
1125 W. River Road
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
218-847-1385
1-888-458-1385

Fergus Falls
128 W Cavour Avenue
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
218-739-3011

Mahnomen
118 W. Madison Ave.
PO Box 76
Mahnomen, MN 56557
218-935-5022

Park Rapids
120 North Central
Park Rapids, MN 56470
218-732-7204

Wadena
311 North Jefferson
Wadena, MN 56482
218-632-3600



**AmeriCorps
Seniors**

**Retired & Senior Volunteer Program
RSVP Time Sheet/Reimbursement Form**

"Serving Becker, Clearwater, Hubbard, Mahnomen, Otter Tail, Todd, Wadena and Wilkin Counties in Minnesota."

Volunteer Name: _____

Volunteer Station/Site: _____

DATE	LOCATION/PURPOSE OF TRAVEL	HOURS	MILES
TOTALS:			

Volunteer Signature Date

Station Supervisor Signature Date

RSVP Representative Signature Date

**Please return to:
MAHUBE-OTWA RSVP Program
1125 West River Rd Detroit Lakes MN 56501**

RSVP Reimbursement Policy

1. Volunteers must work a minimum of one hour to request travel reimbursement for that day.
2. The mileage reimbursement rate is \$.18 per mile.
3. Mileage is paid to volunteers for the miles from their home to their volunteer site and back home again, as well as most mileage while on the job.
4. Public Transit bus fares can be reimbursed. Put the amount of the bus fare in the space provided for miles on the time sheet.
5. Timesheets requesting reimbursement must be signed (green timesheets) or initialed (green timesheet) and dated by the volunteer and the station supervisor.
6. Reimbursement checks are done **about** the 15th of each month. **Time sheets are due in the RSVP office by the 10th of each month.**
7. RSVP may deny reimbursement requests that do not conform to this policy.

REIMBURSEMENT MINIMUM/MAXIMUM: RSVP can reimburse volunteers a minimum of \$3.00 and up to a maximum of \$20.00 each month for mileage, but may discontinue reimbursement if the budget dictates. Mileage DOES NOT carry over month-to-month.

Mahube- Otwa RSVP Timesheet

Month:

****Signature of Station Representative and Date**:** _____

Station Name:

Volunteer		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Total	*Volunteer Initials/Date*	
	Hours																																		
	Mileage																																		
Purpose of Travel:																																			
	Hours																																		
	Mileage																																		
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	Hours																																		
	Mileage																																		
Purpose of Travel:																																			

Clients served/pounds of food distributed/services provided (if applicable):

Signature of RSVP Representative:

Date:

****Required for RSVP documentation** - NO MILEAGE CAN BE PAID WITHOUT SIGNATURE OF STATION REPRESENTATIVE, VOLUNTEER INITIALS/DATE, AND PURPOSE OF TRAVEL.**

Grievance Procedure

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a standardized RSVP grievance/appeal process for dissatisfied volunteers and assures equal opportunity to all residents. It also exists to provide a process for MAHUBE-OTWA RSVP to deal with a problem encountered by a volunteer or to remedy a problematic situation at a station site.

Policy

MAHUBE-OTWA RSVP provides a grievance process for dissatisfied volunteers who experience problems after they enroll and are placed at a volunteer site. The process is designed to be non-confrontational and resolve disputes reasonably.

Procedure

Volunteers have 30 days to file a grievance from the date the incident occurs. Volunteers can initiate a grievance in two ways: (1) Informal statement, verbal or written, or (2) Formal written statement.

Informal Statement

A volunteer may initiate a grievance/appeal by contacting either the RSVP Director or the RSVP Coordinator in person via telephone, or in writing via mail or e-mail. The grievance must address the specific aspect of program dissatisfaction. The RSVP Director will respond to the informal grievance either verbally or in writing within five business days. If the volunteer is not satisfied with the response, he or she will be given the option of filing a formal written statement.

Formal Written Statement

Volunteers may file a formal grievance by submitting a written statement describing the problem. The RSVP Director will review the written facts and determine an appropriate finding based on RSVP regulations. She will notify the volunteer in writing of the finding, with reference to policy regulations. Program response to formal written statements will be completed within 14 business days of receiving the formal complaint.

Specific Behaviors That are Prohibited by RSVP Regulations

Volunteers and grantee staff members do not engage in and grantee funds are not used for any of the following activities:

- Electoral activities
- Voter registration or transportation to the polls
- Efforts to influence legislation
- Use of offensive language
- Physical contact between volunteers and residents
- Volunteers cannot engage in any activity that would otherwise be performed by paid employees
- Neither the grantee nor any volunteer station receives compensation from the beneficiaries of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.

Prohibited Activities

Per regulation 45 CFR 2553.91 (a)-(g) the following limitations apply to the operation of the RSVP Program and to the expenditure of grant funds:

- a) Volunteers and grantee staff do not engage in, and grantee funds are not used for, any of the following activities, to the extent they are prohibited in the applicable program regulations: Electoral activities, voter registration, voter transportation to polls, and efforts to influence legislation.
- b) Volunteers do not engage in any activity which would otherwise be performed by an employed worker or which would supplant the hiring of or result in the displacement of employed workers or impair existing contracts for service.
- c) Neither the grantee nor any volunteer station requests or receives compensation from the beneficiaries of AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.
- d) Any volunteer station financial support of the AmeriCorps Seniors project is not a precondition for that station to obtain volunteer service.
- e) An AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer does not receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardian, or members of their family, or friends.
- f) Grant funds are not used to finance labor or anti-labor organizations or related activity.
- g) Project staff or volunteers do not give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in proselytization as part of their duties.