



## NWCSA – RSVP

Sponsored by Northwest Wisconsin  
Community Services Agency, Inc.  
Covering Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas & Iron Counties



**AmeriCorps**  
Seniors

1527 Tower Ave  
Superior, WI 54880  
Phone: 715-394-3644  
Fax: 715-392-3644

623 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave East  
Ashland, WI 54806  
Phone: 715-292-6400  
Fax: 715-292-6403



# Volunteer Handbook



## Public Notification

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, including individuals with limited English proficiency, sex, sexual orientation, age, political affiliation, religion or on the basis of disability if the volunteer is a qualified individual with a disability.



NWCSA-RSVP — An Invitation to Serve



## Ashland Location

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program  
623 2nd Avenue East  
Ashland, WI 54806  
Telephone: 715-292-6400  
Fax: 715-292-6403

## Superior Location

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program  
1527 Tower Ave  
Superior, WI 54880  
Telephone: 715-392-3644  
Fax: 715-392-3644

## Staff

Director—Beth Paul-Soch  
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Admin Assistant—Mary Kay Foley  
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## Staff

RSVP Coordinator—Andrea Wright  
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Website: [www.northwest-csa.org](http://www.northwest-csa.org)

### Mission Statement

Engage persons, 55 and older, in meeting critical needs that strengthen our community, improve lives and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.

### Vision Statement

Provide our volunteers and our stations opportunities for any individual, 55 or older, to stay healthy and make a difference by meeting community needs.

## Locally Sponsored by

Northwest Wisconsin Community Services Agency, Inc.  
Millie Rounsville, CEO  
1118 Tower Avenue  
Superior, WI 54880

## **What Is NWCSA Northwest Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)?**

NWCSA-RSVP is a leader in volunteer recruitment and placement for adults 55 years and older. With more than three decades of experience partnering with local non-profit agencies, NWCSA-RSVP helps to identify community needs and recruits volunteers with interest in meeting those needs.

NWCSA-RSVP is partially funded through AmeriCorps Seniors, a Federal agency. In addition, NWCSA-RSVP receive financial support from the State Department of Health Services through the Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources, local government, and fundraising efforts by the local program. In joining the program, you become part of a national movement of hundreds of thousands of volunteers striving to help their communities.

We are locally sponsored by the Northwest Wisconsin Community Services Agency, Inc. The NWCSA-RSVP program began in 1973 in this area serving 4 counties-Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas and Iron.



### **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Historical Time Line**

- 1961 White House Conference on Aging called attention to the continuing need of older people for useful activity.
- 1965 Older American Act was passed. Community Services Society of New York launched a pilot project that involved a small group of older adults in volunteer service to their community. It was called SERVE (Serve and Enrich Retirement by Volunteer Experience.)
- 1969 Due to the success of SERVE, which demonstrated beyond a doubt the value of the services of older volunteers, an amendment to the Older Americans Act was passed, creating the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).
- 1971 RSVP was launched in spring with an appropriation of \$500,000 under the auspices of the Administration on Aging (AoA). In July, RSVP was transferred from AoA to the Federal agency, ACTION (the Federal Domestic Volunteer Agency) which had oversight of Federal domestic volunteer programs. Eleven projects were started the summer of 1971.



1972 The success of RSVP caused Congress to increase the appropriation to \$15,000,000. To expand nationally, a national conference of State Executives on Aging was held to solicit ideas and assistance in developing RSVP projects within each state.

1973 During the first half of the year, Action was gradually decentralized and program and fiscal responsibilities were given to ten regional offices. At the same time, the program grew to 590 RSVP projects by June 30th.

1974 Between 1972 and 1974 RSVP experienced the period of greatest growth. By June 20, 1994 there were 668 projects operating on a Federal appropriation of \$15,000,000.

1988 There were 750 RSVP projects supported by Federal funding of almost \$30,000,000. Additionally there were 6 RSVP projects entirely supported by non-Action funds. Approximately 400,000 senior volunteers served in 1988.

1993 Corporation for National Service was formed when President Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. The new act lowered the age for participation in RSVP from 60 to 55. Congress stated its expectations for the Corporation through a statement of purpose that, in part, included using national and volunteer service by Americans of all ages to:

1. Meet the diverse human, educational, environmental, and public safety needs of the United States without displacing existing vendors;
2. Renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community throughout the United States;
3. Expand and strengthen existing service programs with demonstrated experience in providing structured serve opportunities with visible benefits to the participants and the community; and
4. Provide tangible benefits to the communities in which national service is performed.

The operations of three entities came together to form the Corporation for National Service-ACTION (the Federal Domestic Volunteer Agency); the Commission on National and Community Service, and the office of National Service. RSVP is one of three existing volunteer programs for older adults administered by the Corporation under the banner of the "National Senior Service Corps." The Retired Senior Volunteer Program had a name change. It is now recognized as: The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program.



1999 The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program included 768 local projects with over 450,000 volunteers contributing 75 million hours of service to their communities through a network of 70,000 local non-profit and community based organizations. RSVP now services more than 1,400 counties nationally. RSVP volunteers continue to make a difference in the lives of those they serve and their communities, while enriching their own lives through service.

2007 RSVP had 741 projects nationwide with nearly 430,000 senior volunteers serving.

Current The Retired Senior & Volunteer Program is under AmeriCorps Seniors and administered by the AmeriCorps.

## **IMPACT**

Participants of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) provide 47 million hours of service annually to communities across the country. The value of these services is over \$1.5 billion dollars. Financial support for RSVP also includes state, county, local sponsorship, grants, fundraising activities, and donations.

In 2009 Congress passed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act (SAA), the most sweeping expansion of national service in a generation. This landmark law not only expands service opportunities but also focuses national service on key outcomes; builds the capacity of individuals, non-profits and communities to succeed; and encourages innovative approaches to solving problems.

The strategic plan emphasized grant creation in the Six Primary Focus Areas identified by SAA, plus other areas of community need.

### **Education**

- School Readiness
- Succeeding in K-12<sup>th</sup> grade



### **Healthy Futures**

- Homebound Senior & Disabled Individuals
- Reducing Childhood Obesity & Increasing Access to Nutritious Food
- Increasing Access to Health Care



## **Environmental Stewardship**

Improving Lands or Habitats

## **Economic Opportunity**

Financial Literacy

Housing

Employment

## **Veterans & Military Families**

Veterans Served

## **Disaster Services**

Assistance Provided

## Capacity Building

Leverage Community Assets through Public-Private Partnerships

## Other Community Priorities

RSVP Senior Corp Performance Measures are explained in more detail at:  
[www.nationalserviceresources.gov\nnpm\rsvp](http://www.nationalserviceresources.gov\nnpm\rsvp)



## **Who Can Be An NWCSA-RSVP Volunteer?**

Any person 55 years or older who wants to share their skills, expertise, and life-long experiences to help address community needs can become an NWCSA-RSVP Volunteer.

## **What Do The RSVP Volunteers Do?**



RSVP volunteers may continue the type of work they enjoyed earlier in life using their personal interests and skills, or opt to try something new. NWCSA-RSVP volunteers tutor children, deliver meals to home bound individuals, assist at congregate meal sites, become involved with their local nursing home or museum, assist at the local library or hospital and help at the thrift store or local food shelf in their community, just to name a few. Community needs are always on-going.

NWCSA-RSVP volunteers choose how, where, and how often they want to serve, with commitments ranging from a few hours to 40 hours per week. NWCSA-RSVP staff is available to assist you in finding what works for you.

## **Special Projects**

NWCSA-RSVP also offers limited term assignments, realizing that volunteers may want to serve their community but still do all they planned during retirement.

Many agencies need help with mailings, office work, and other projects only at certain times of the year. NWCSA-RSVP tries to fill their requests for limited term assignments.

If you would like to assist with limited-term volunteer projects, please inform NWCSA-RSVP staff and they will contact you when one becomes available.

## **What is a Volunteer Station?**

A station is the site where NWCSA-RSVP members volunteer. These are either private, non-profit organizations, government agencies, or proprietary health-care facilities in partnership with NWCSA-RSVP. Examples include schools, nursing homes, museums, libraries, hospitals, congregate meal sites, senior centers, food shelves.....

Volunteer station staff will assign NWCSA-RSVP volunteers to their duties, and in some cases, will serve as the on-going, immediate supervisors of the volunteers of a site. Station staff provides you with supervision and the material you need in order to work effectively.

Lastly, NWCSA-RSVP and the volunteer station have in place a signed Memorandum of Understanding, which contains basic provisions that guide the working relationship between them.



## Change in Assignments

As time goes on, you may decide that you would like to try out at a new work station/site or add on to what you are already involved with. That's your choice!!

Whatever the reason, simply call the NWCSA-RSVP office to make arrangements to for the change. You can make a selection from existing opportunities or suggest a specific interest and let NWCSA-RSVP help you with the legwork.

## Reporting Volunteer Hours



Volunteers report their hours on a monthly basis, usually through the volunteer station roster called the NWCSA-RSVP Monthly Report of Volunteer Hours or use Individual Hours Form. It is very important that NWCSA-RSVP have a tracking method in place in order for the hours to be logged at the office. The volunteer station also needs to know how many hours you gave for their reporting purposes. Please ask the site coordinator/supervisor where the monthly report form is kept for posting your volunteer time. Hours are emailed, faxed or hand delivered to our office by the 5th of the month by the site manager/supervisor. Individual Hours are sent, emailed, faxed or brought to our office by the volunteer by the 5th of the month.

## Why the Hours Are Tracked

- NWCSA-RSVP is required by our federal, state & local sponsors to collect information on your volunteer service. Information ranges from hours served to the type and extent the impact of your volunteer service has on the people and/or community that you serve. This information paints a picture of senior involvement in the four counties we serve.
- Your hours and type of service as an NWCSA-RSVP volunteer are compiled with data and impact reports from across NWCSA-RSVP programs nationwide. These are sent to Congress and help raise awareness of the activities and impact that seniors have in their communities.

## Benefits Derived from Volunteering with NWCSA-RSVP

**INSURANCE:** Insurance is provided free of charge for all NWCSA-RSVP volunteers while they are volunteering. The coverage includes:

1. **Excess Accident Medical Insurance:** This covers a volunteer for a personal injury arising while participating in a NWCSA-RSVP activity or recognition event.
2. **Personal Liability:** This coverage protects a volunteer from a personal injury or property damage liability claim arising out of volunteering.
3. **Excess Automobile Liability:** This protects a volunteer from a bodily injury or property damage liability claim arising while using their personal automobile in connection with program-related volunteer work.



**PLEASE NOTE!!** If a volunteer has an accident that results in a personal injury or liability claim, please contact NWCSA-RSVP at 715-292-6400 as soon as possible so the necessary steps can be taken to process the claim. Also, notify the Volunteer Station supervisor immediately. Drivers are required to maintain the minimum automobile coverage required by Wisconsin's State Law. NWCSA-RSVP coverage supplements the insurance purchased by the volunteer. An insurance brochure has been enclosed in your welcome folder.

**RSVP NAME BADGE:** Each volunteer receives a NWCSA-RSVP name badge with their welcome folder. Volunteers should wear the name badge while volunteering at their assigned station so people know that you are a member of NWCSA-RSVP.

**MEALS:** It is NWCSA-RSVP policy that whenever a volunteer's assignment is either related to or extends through a meal period, NWCSA-RSVP can provide for the cost of the meal up to \$5.00 per volunteer. A meal receipt must accompany the request for reimbursement in order to be reimbursed. Often, the Volunteer Station will provide the meal as a service to the volunteer who has been placed with them.

**MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT:** Volunteers, driving their own vehicles, can be reimbursed at the rate of 26 cents per mile for going to/from their volunteer assignment(s). Volunteers are asked to submit their mileage when they drive 100 miles or more per month if they are requesting reimbursement. A mileage form must be filled out by the Volunteer in ink and submitted to the NWCSA-RSVP office by the 5th of every month.

**RECOGNITION:** Once a year, NWCSA-RSVP sponsors a Recognition Banquet for all NWCSA-RSVP volunteers. NWCSA-RSVP awards its members certificates of appreciation for 5, 10, 15, 20 & 25 years of service.

**NEWSLETTER:** The NWCSA-RSVP newsletter is mailed/emailed to all members and Volunteer Stations. It contains information on service opportunities and helpful information for seniors. NWCSA-RSVP members and the Volunteer Stations are encouraged to submit articles, poems, and other ideas for publication in the newsletter.



## **Rights & Responsibilities of NWCSA-RSVP Volunteers**

### **Every NWCSA-RSVP volunteer has a right to:**

- A suitable and meaningful volunteer assignment.
- Receive needed training by the NWCSA-RSVP staff and/or volunteer station.
- Change or take on additional assignments.
- Be treated as a co-worker with respect and appreciation.
- Ask any questions that will clarify a task or assignment.
- Know as much about the agency as possible, including its staff, clients, policies, and programs.
- Be heard and have a part in planning.
- Know as much about NWCSA-RSVP as possible.
- Have regular contact with the NWCSA-RSVP office and staff.

### **Every NWCSA-RSVP volunteer has the responsibility to:**

- To meet time commitments or to provide notice to worksite or NWCSA-RSVP so alternative arrangements can be made if you are unable to volunteer.
- Fill out the hours and/or mileage report on time and make sure it is turned into the NWCSA-RSVP office by the 5th of every month.
- Wear your NWCSA-RSVP name badge while you volunteer.
- Inform your supervisor if you have an accident while you are volunteering.
- Adhere to all policies of the volunteer station, especially confidentiality.
- Not take on more responsibility than you can handle.
- Answer any correspondence that you may receive by mail or over the phone.

### **Prohibited Activities**

- NWCSA-RSVP volunteers may not engage in and grantee funds are not used for these activities:
    - Electoral activities
    - Voter registration
    - Voter transportation to polls
    - Efforts to influence legislation
  - NWCSA-RSVP volunteers may not engage in any activity which would be otherwise performed by an employed worker.
  - Neither the sponsor nor any NWCSA-RSVP station may receive compensation from the beneficiaries of the AmeriCorps Volunteers.
  - NWCSA-RSVP volunteers may not receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardians or members of their family or friends.
  - Grant funds may not be used to finance labor or anti-labor organizations or related activity.
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## **Withdrawal Policy**

Our RSVP policy states that volunteers who have not recorded hours or are absent from volunteer service for one year may be withdrawn and placed into the inactive volunteer file.

You are important to us. NWCSA-RSVP staff will contact you if records show you have had no activity for one year. We understand that there can be many reasons for inactivity, some being illness of yourself or a family member, reflecting a change in the type of volunteering you are interested in or possibly a problem may exist with your current station. Whatever the reason, we are here to help in any way we can.

If you are a “snow bird” and are gone from the area for an extended period of time, please let us know. We will note that on your record.

Volunteers can easily be reinstated into the program. Let us know. If problems or concerns are needed to be addressed regarding a volunteer station or another issue, please contact us at 715-292-6400, X1 or X2.

## **Grievance Procedure**

The grievance procedure for members of NWCSA-RSVP includes three steps to be followed to resolve them. Every effort should be made to solve the problem before presenting it in writing as a grievance.

1. The volunteer shall present to the Program Director a written grievance regarding any problems or complaints that cannot be resolved to the volunteer’s satisfaction.
  2. Failing to come to an agreeable solution, the volunteer’s written grievance along with a written response from the Program Director shall be forward to the Chairperson of the Advisory Council.
  3. The Chairperson will share copies of the grievance and response with the members of the Executive Committee (made up of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary of the Advisory Council). The Committee may or may not invite the volunteer and/or the Program Director to the meeting. The Committee will make a decision and that decision will be finalized and entered into the minutes as such. A copy of the minutes of that meeting will be sent to the NWCSA-RSVP Program Director. The volunteer will be notified of the decision.
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## **REMEMBER**

- Be a good representative of NWCSA-RSVP and the community while involved in your volunteer duties.
- Please wear your NWCSA-RSVP name badge proudly.
- Attend any training sessions needed for your volunteer assignments.
- Maintain the minimum automobile liability coverage required by state law if driving to and from the volunteer assignment.
- As an NWCSA-RSVP volunteer, religious activity such as giving instruction, conducting worship services or engaging in any form of proselytization as part of his/her duties is prohibited.
- NWCSA-RSVP volunteers can not be asked to replace a paid staff person within an agency.
- As an NWCSA-RSVP volunteer, you shall not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, and national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, or political affiliation, or on the basis of disability, if the volunteer with the disability is qualified to serve in that capacity.

## **Advisory Council**

The NWCSA-RSVP Advisory Council meets four to six times per year to advise and assist in the NWCSA-RSVP operation. Its function includes planning volunteer recognition events, program evaluation, fundraising, and future direction of the program. There is representation on the Council from each of the three counties we serve. Over 50 % are age 55 or over. If you have an interest in serving on the NWCSA-RSVP Advisory Council, please call the NWCSA-RSVP office.

## **A Final Word about Volunteering**

NWCSA-RSVP signs a Memorandum of Understanding with each Volunteer Station. This is to insure that NWCSA-RSVP members will be fairly and respectfully treated. If ever a volunteer feels that there exists a difficulty at the volunteer site that she/he cannot resolve, please refer to our grievance policy on how NWCSA-RSVP can assist you.

NWCSA-RSVP volunteers often become loyal to the people and the agency they have chosen to work for (and that is good.) Be proud to say “I am an NWCSA-RSVP Volunteer.” Relate to other people the wonderful work you do for programs as an NWCSA-RSVP.

