

MAHUBE-OTWA
RETIRED & SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (RSVP)
VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



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MAHUBE-OTWA Retired & Senior Volunteer Program

(RSVP)

Serving Mahnomen, Hubbard, Becker, Otter Tail and Wadena Counties

Welcome to MAHUBE-OTWA RSVP

Thank you for choosing to volunteer through the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

As an RSVP volunteer, you bring valuable experience, skills, and knowledge that help strengthen our communities. Whether you are assisting older adults, supporting local nonprofits, helping with community events, or sharing your talents in other meaningful ways, your service makes a difference.

RSVP is part of AmeriCorps Seniors, a national network that connects adults age 55 and older with volunteer opportunities that match their interests, skills, and availability. Through RSVP, you decide how, where, and when you want to serve.

At MAHUBE-OTWA, we are committed to providing a rewarding volunteer experience by offering training, support, recognition, and resources to help you succeed. We value the time and dedication you share with our communities and look forward to partnering with you.

This handbook provides important information about RSVP policies, volunteer expectations, benefits, and available resources. Please review it carefully and contact RSVP staff whenever you have questions or need assistance.

Welcome to the MAHUBE-OTWA RSVP family—we are grateful for your service.



AmeriCorps Seniors

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What is RSVP:

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is part of AmeriCorps Seniors, one of the nation's largest volunteer engagement programs for adults age 55 and older.

RSVP connects volunteers with meaningful opportunities to serve in their communities while using their unique skills, talents, and life experiences. Volunteers choose how, where, and how often they serve, making RSVP a flexible and rewarding way to give back.

Through partnerships with nonprofit organizations, schools, healthcare providers, community agencies, food shelves, and other local programs, RSVP volunteers help address important community needs.

Volunteers may provide services such as supporting older adults, mentoring youth, assisting with food distribution, helping with community events, providing administrative support, leading wellness activities, and much more.

RSVP receives federal funding from AmeriCorps Seniors.

MAHUBE-OTWA Service Area:

The MAHUBE-OTWA RSVP Program serves communities throughout our five-county service area by matching volunteers with opportunities that align with their interests, abilities, and schedules.

Our goal is to create meaningful volunteer experiences that strengthen communities while enhancing the lives of those who serve.

Volunteer Eligibility:

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP provides opportunities for adults age 55 and older to use their skills, talents, and life experiences to make a positive difference in their communities. Whether assisting older adults, supporting local organizations, helping with tax preparation, mentoring youth, or serving in other meaningful roles, RSVP volunteers help strengthen and enrich the communities they serve.

To become an RSVP volunteer, individuals must:

- Be 55 years of age or older.
- Complete the RSVP volunteer registration process.
- Be willing and able to perform the essential responsibilities of their volunteer assignment, with reasonable accommodation provided when appropriate.
- Demonstrate reliability and a commitment to fulfilling volunteer responsibilities.
- Treat others with dignity, respect, and professionalism.
- Work effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences.

- Follow the policies, procedures, and expectations of RSVP and the volunteer station where they serve.
- Meet any additional requirements associated with a specific volunteer assignment, including training or background checks when applicable.

Getting Started:

Thank you for your interest in AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP! Getting started is easy, and RSVP staff are available to help you find a volunteer opportunity that is meaningful and rewarding.

Individuals interested in becoming RSVP volunteers are encouraged to contact the MAHUBE-OTWA RSVP office to learn more about available opportunities and complete the volunteer registration process.

RSVP volunteers serve at a variety of community organizations throughout our service area. Volunteer opportunities may include serving food shelves, Meals on Wheels programs, libraries, museums, schools, healthcare organizations, public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other community-based programs.

If you are unsure where you would like to volunteer, RSVP staff will work with you to identify opportunities that match your interests, skills, experience, availability, and desired level of commitment.

Once a volunteer placement has been identified, the volunteer station supervisor will provide information about the volunteer role, responsibilities, training requirements, safety procedures, and site expectations. Volunteers will receive any necessary orientation and training before beginning service.

As your interests and availability change, you may explore new volunteer opportunities within RSVP. Staff are available to assist with changing assignments, adding volunteer roles, or identifying additional training opportunities to support your volunteer experience.

We are committed to helping every volunteer find a meaningful way to serve and make a positive impact in our communities.

Benefits of RSVP Membership:

Personalized Assistance: The RSVP team is committed to helping you find a volunteer opportunity that fits your unique interests and goals. We work with you to match your skills, interests, availability, and preferred location with a meaningful volunteer role. As your interests or schedule changes, our staff will continue to provide guidance and support throughout your volunteer journey.

Supplemental Insurance: As an RSVP member, you are covered by supplemental insurance while volunteering. Coverage includes:

- Accident medical insurance
- Volunteer liability insurance
- Automobile liability insurance that provides excess coverage beyond any other valid and collectible insurance

Be Counted as Part of a National Movement: Adults age 55 and older contribute thousands of volunteer hours each day to strengthen communities across the country. As an RSVP volunteer, your service hours become part of this nationwide effort, demonstrating the significant impact older adults have in addressing community needs. Together, RSVP volunteers show policymakers and community leaders that older adults are making meaningful contributions, solving problems, and building stronger communities.

Volunteer Recognition: RSVP values and celebrates the dedication of its volunteers. Members are recognized in a variety of ways throughout the year, including appreciation events, special recognition programs, training opportunities, and other member activities.

Travel Reimbursement: RSVP may reimburse a portion of your eligible out-of-pocket transportation expenses incurred while volunteering.

These reimbursements:

- Are not considered taxable income
- Are not treated as wages or compensation
- Do not affect unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, temporary disability, retirement benefits, public assistance, or similar programs
- Are not subject to garnishment
- Do not reduce or eliminate your eligibility for government assistance or services
- Are not subject to minimum wage laws

Volunteer Insurance: Volunteers who use their personal vehicles to travel to and from their volunteer assignments are provided with excess automobile and volunteer liability coverage while serving through RSVP.

To be eligible for this coverage:

- The RSVP Volunteer Registration Form must be completed, signed, and dated by both the volunteer and an RSVP staff member.
- Volunteers must verify that they maintain at least the minimum required automobile insurance coverage and possess a valid driver's license.
- Federal regulations require that all beneficiary information be completed in full on the registration form.
- Completed forms are securely maintained in the RSVP office.

Any automobile accident or insurance-related incident that occurs while performing volunteer service should be reported immediately to RSVP staff.

A copy of the RSVP Volunteer Insurance Policy is available at each volunteer station or by contacting the RSVP office.

Orientation: Volunteers are most successful when they have a clear understanding of the RSVP program, as well as their roles and responsibilities. The RSVP staff are committed to providing the information, resources, and support you need to have positive and rewarding volunteer experience.

This Volunteer Handbook serves as your introduction to RSVP policies, procedures, and expectations. If you have questions or concerns at any time, please contact either RSVP Coordinator. We are here to support you throughout your volunteer service.

Station Orientation: When you begin a volunteer assignment, your Station Representative will provide an orientation to your specific volunteer role and the procedures of the organization.

As an RSVP volunteer, you are expected to follow the station's policies and guidelines for volunteers and staff. If you have questions or concerns regarding station policies or procedures, discuss them with your Station Representative. If your concerns are not resolved, please contact your RSVP Coordinator for assistance.

Getting to Know Your Volunteer Station:

The following information will help you become familiar with your volunteer station and prepare you for a successful experience:

- Learn about the station's history.
- Understand the station's mission and purpose.
- Know your volunteer role and responsibilities.
- Understand the goals of your service and the needs your volunteer work helps address.
- Become familiar with the individuals or populations the station serves.
- Get to know your supervisor and the staff members you will be working with. They are your primary resource for questions and support.
- Review the station's policies and procedures, including attendance expectations, dress code, check-in procedures, confidentiality requirements, and any other volunteer guidelines.
- Understand what resources, benefits, and support are available to you while volunteering.

- Learn practical information such as the location of restrooms, coat storage, work areas, parking, break rooms, lunch areas, emergency exits, and other important facilities.

RSVP Advisory Council

The MAHUBE-OTWA Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) values the experience, knowledge, and perspectives of our volunteers and community members. The RSVP Advisory Council provides an opportunity for volunteers and community partners to play an active role in helping guide and strengthen the program.

The Advisory Council helps ensure RSVP continues to meet the needs of the communities we serve throughout Mahanomen, Hubbard, Becker, Otter Tail, and Wadena Counties.

Who Serves on the Advisory Council?

The RSVP Advisory Council is made up of volunteers, community members, and partners who bring a variety of experiences and perspectives. Members may include individuals who:

- Understand the needs and strengths of our local communities.
- Have experience with volunteer service, community engagement, or nonprofit organizations.
- Are interested in helping RSVP grow and better serve volunteers and community members.
- Represent the diverse communities and populations served by RSVP.

What Does the Advisory Council Do?

Advisory Council members help by:

- Sharing ideas and recommendations to improve RSVP programs and services.
- Providing feedback on volunteer experiences and community needs.
- Supporting volunteer outreach, recognition, and engagement efforts.
- Helping promote awareness of RSVP and its impact.
- Identifying opportunities for partnerships and community connections.

Advisory Council members are encouraged to:

- Attend scheduled meetings and actively participate in discussions.
- Share their knowledge, ideas, and community perspectives.
- Review information provided and provide feedback.
- Work collaboratively with other Council members, volunteers, and RSVP staff.

Interested in Serving?

We welcome RSVP volunteers and community members who are interested in sharing their voice and helping shape the future of the program. If you would like to learn more about joining the RSVP Advisory Council, please contact the RSVP Program Director.

Your experience and ideas help strengthen RSVP and ensure we continue creating meaningful volunteer opportunities throughout our communities.

Record Keeping:

Accurate record keeping is essential to the success and continued funding of the RSVP program. Your RSVP Monthly Timesheet documents the valuable volunteer service you provide and allows RSVP staff to track volunteer hours and process eligible mileage reimbursement requests.

You may begin recording your volunteer time when you leave your home to travel to your volunteer assignment and continue until you return home. Detailed instructions for completing your Monthly Timesheet are provided in the Forms and Procedures section of this handbook.

Completed RSVP Monthly Timesheets should be turned into a MAHUBE-OTWA office by the 10th of each month for the previous month's volunteer hours and mileage. Before submitting your timesheet:

- Ensure your Station Representative has signed the form.
- Initial the timesheet to verify that the information is accurate and complete.

Mileage: RSVP may provide reimbursement to help offset the cost of transportation to and from your volunteer assignment.

Please note the following guidelines:

- Only the volunteers who drive their personal vehicle to the volunteer assignment may request mileage reimbursement.
- To ensure reimbursements are processed in a timely manner, completed RSVP Monthly Timesheets must be submitted by the 10th of each month for the month prior.
- Monthly Timesheets must be signed by the Station Supervisor and initialized by the volunteer before they are submitted.
- Timesheet forms and detailed instructions are available in the Forms and Procedures section of this handbook.
- Completed timesheets may be submitted as a hard copy or emailed directly by the Station Supervisor.

Confidentiality: Many volunteer assignments involve access to confidential client or agency information. As an RSVP volunteer, you are responsible for protecting the privacy of the individuals and organizations you serve.

Confidential information, including names, telephone numbers, addresses, medical information, or any other identifying details—must never be shared with anyone outside the volunteer station or authorized RSVP staff.

Examples of breaches of confidentiality include:

- Discussing a client with family members, friends, or others who are not authorized to receive the information.
- Talking about a client in public or other inappropriate places where conversations may be overheard.
- Sharing confidential information with a client's family members unless you have been specifically authorized to do so by the volunteer station.

Confidentiality is the foundation of the trust between volunteers, clients, volunteer stations, and RSVP. Protecting private information helps ensure the dignity, safety, and privacy of those we serve. For your own privacy and security, please share your personal information only with RSVP staff and authorized personnel at your volunteer station. If you are ever unsure whether information is confidential or may be shared, ask your Station Representative or RSVP Coordinator before disclosing it.

Equal Opportunity: MAHUBE-OTWA RSVP welcomes all volunteers and is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation and service. We do not exclude anyone, deny benefits, or allow discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, veteran status, genetic information, or any other status protected by federal or state law. We value diversity and work to create a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible environment for every volunteer and everyone we serve.

Commitment: Your volunteer station counts on you and appreciates the time you give. Keeping a regular volunteer schedule helps the station plan ahead and make sure community needs are met.

If you are sick or something unexpected comes up and you cannot volunteer, please contact your volunteer station as soon as possible. This gives staff time to make other arrangements.

If you need to stop volunteering or are no longer able to continue in your current assignment, please let both your volunteer station and MAHUBE-OTWA RSVP staff know. Timely communication helps make the transition easier for everyone.

Volunteer Separation: RSVP values every volunteer and recognizes that circumstances may occasionally require a break from service. In accordance with RSVP policy, volunteers who have not served for **12 consecutive months** will be designated

as inactive. Volunteers are always welcome to return, and we are happy to reactivate your RSVP membership when you are ready to resume volunteering.

Common reasons for inactive status may include:

- Extended illness or recovery
- Relocation
- Extended travel
- Other personal circumstances

If you anticipate being unable to volunteer for an extended period, please notify both your Station Representative and the MAHUBE-OTWA RSVP Staff.

Separation for Just Cause: In certain situations, RSVP may separate a volunteer for **just cause** and in accordance with established policies and procedures.

Examples may include:

- Repeated unauthorized absences
- Misconduct
- Inability to perform assigned duties
- Inability or unwillingness to follow supervision or volunteer station policies

If you have concerns about your volunteer assignment, you are encouraged to first discuss them with an RSVP Staff or the RSVP Director. Many concerns can be resolved through open communication.

If the issue cannot be resolved, you may contact the Executive Director of MAHUBE-OTWA for further review.

Volunteer stations also have the authority to request the removal of a volunteer when there is appropriate cause, in accordance with RSVP policies and procedures.

Conduct: As an RSVP volunteer, you are expected to conduct yourself in a professional, respectful, and courteous manner at all times. Volunteers are required to follow the policies, procedures, and expectations of their volunteer station, which may include requirements related to training, attendance, dress code, safety, and workplace conduct.

In accordance with federal regulations, RSVP volunteers must not engage in activities that identify RSVP with or support political campaigns or partisan political activities while performing volunteer service.

Similarly, volunteers may not provide religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in proselytizing as part of their RSVP volunteer duties.

Drugs and Alcohol: The use of illegal drugs or alcohol or reporting for volunteer service while under the influence of either, is strictly prohibited. Violations of this policy may result in the termination of all RSVP volunteer assignments.

Sexual Harassment and Workplace Violence: RSVP and its volunteer stations are committed to maintaining an environment where everyone is treated with dignity, courtesy, and respect. Harassment, discrimination, bullying, threats, intimidation, or acts of violence will not be tolerated.

Volunteers are expected to contribute to a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for fellow volunteers, staff, clients, and members of the public. Failure to comply with these expectations may result in the termination of RSVP volunteer assignments.

Grievance Procedure:

Purpose: The purpose of the grievance procedure is to provide a fair, consistent, and accessible process for volunteers to address concerns or appeal decisions related to their RSVP service. This process ensures equal opportunity for all volunteers and provides a constructive way to resolve issues that may arise between a volunteer and the RSVP program or volunteer station.

Policy: MAHUBE-OTWA RSVP is committed to resolving volunteer concerns in a timely, respectful, and non-confrontational manner. Volunteers who experience concerns after enrollment and placement at a volunteer station are encouraged to use the grievance process to seek resolution.

Procedure: A grievance must be submitted within **30 calendar days** of the incident or event giving rise to the concern. Volunteers can initiate a grievance in two ways: (1) Informal statement, verbal or written, or (2) Formal written statement.

Informal Statement: Volunteers are encouraged to begin by contacting the RSVP Director or an RSVP Coordinator in person, by telephone, by mail, or by email. The volunteer should clearly describe the concern or specific aspect of program dissatisfaction.

The RSVP Director will respond verbally or in writing within **five business days**. If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal process, they may submit a formal written grievance.

Formal Written Statement: A formal grievance may be submitted by providing a written statement describing the concern in detail. The RSVP Director will review the information, evaluate the concern in accordance with RSVP policies and regulations, and determine an appropriate resolution. The volunteer will receive a written response that includes the findings and any applicable policy references. A written response to a formal grievance will be provided within **14 business days** of receiving the complaint.

Activities Prohibited by RSVP Regulations:

Prohibited Activities: In accordance with 45 CFR § 2553.91(a)–(g), the following limitations apply to the operation of the RSVP program and the use of grant funds.

While serving as an RSVP volunteer, the following activities are prohibited:

- Participating in partisan political or electoral activities, including voter registration, transporting individuals to polling places for the purpose of voting, or activities intended to influence legislation, when prohibited by program regulations.
- Performing work that would otherwise be completed by a paid employee, replacing or displacing employed workers, or impairing existing contracts for services.
- Requesting or accepting compensation on behalf of RSVP or a volunteer station from individuals who receive services from AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteers.
- Requiring a volunteer station to provide financial support to the RSVP program as a condition for receiving volunteer services.
- Accepting fees, gifts of payment, or compensation for volunteer services from service recipients, their legal guardians, family members, or friends.
- Using RSVP grant funds to support labor or anti-labor organizations or related activities.
- Providing religious instruction, conducting worship services, or engaging in proselytizing while performing RSVP volunteer duties.

These requirements help ensure that RSVP volunteers serve communities in a manner that is fair, nonpartisan, and consistent with federal regulations. Volunteers who have questions about whether an activity is permitted should contact their RSVP Director before participating.

Appendix: Forms

The forms listed in this appendix help RSVP staff keep accurate volunteer records, process eligible reimbursement requests, and support a safe and successful volunteer experience. Please complete each form clearly and contact MAHUBE-OTWA RSVP staff if you have questions or need assistance.

Form	Purpose	When to Complete
RSVP Volunteer Registration Form	Collects required volunteer information and starts RSVP membership.	Before beginning volunteer service and as required by the grant.
Volunteer Station Agreement or Assignment Form	Confirms the volunteer station, role, supervisor, and basic assignment expectations.	When a volunteer begins a new placement or changes assignments.
Monthly Timesheet	Records volunteer hours and mileage for program reporting and eligible reimbursement.	Each month volunteer service is completed.
Mileage Reimbursement Request	Documents eligible travel expenses related to RSVP volunteer service.	When requesting mileage reimbursement, if applicable.
Confidentiality Agreement	Confirms the volunteer understands and agrees to protect private information.	Before serving in a role that may involve confidential information.
Emergency Contact Information	Provides RSVP staff with contact information in case of an emergency.	At enrollment and whenever contact information changes.
Volunteer Separation or Inactive Status Form	Documents when a volunteer pauses service, ends an assignment, or becomes inactive.	When a volunteer stops serving or has not volunteered for an extended period.

Submitting Forms: Completed forms may be turned in to MAHUBE-OTWA RSVP staff or submitted through the process provided by your volunteer station. Monthly timesheets should be submitted by the 10th of each month for the previous month's volunteer hours and mileage.

Keeping Information Current: Please notify RSVP staff if your address, phone number, emergency contact, volunteer station, or transportation information changes. Keeping your information up to date helps RSVP provide accurate records, insurance coverage, communication, and support.