

**MID-RIO GRANDE RSVP**  
RETIREE AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM  
**HANDBOOK**



**SPONSORS:**

City of Belen  
New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services  
Department Senior Corps  
Valencia County



**RSVP Handbook**  
**For The**  
**Mid-Rio Grande RSVP**

Welcome to the Mid-Rio Grande RSVP. We serve the residents of Valencia County through volunteer services offered at a variety of locations in the county. RSVP is a national organization, falling under the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The RSVP offices in New Mexico are served by an office of Senior Corps (apart of CNCS) in Santa Fe.

**Sponsors**

The official sponsors of the Mid-Rio Grande RSVP are the City of Belen, the Corporation for National & Community Service, and The New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department. The RSVP Director and Administrative Assistant are employees of the City of Belen, which acts as the fiscal agent for MidRio Grande RSVP.

**History**

The Mid-Rio Grande RSVP is a national enterprise which places volunteers with a variety of projects and organizations that serve the community. It was created in 1969 as an amendment to the Older American Act. RSVP is now a program of the Senior Corps of the **Corporation for National and Community Service**. The Corporation was created by legislation in 1994. As part of the corporation, that law also created Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Serve America. Besides RSVP, other programs of Senior Corps include the Foster Grandparents Program and the Senior Companion Program.

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Mid-Rio Grande RSVP is to place volunteers with local agencies and non-profit organizations to assist them in making the community better. We also actively seek new volunteers and volunteer stations to improve the quality of life for the people of Valencia County in all walks of life.

### **Volunteers**

RSVP volunteers must be 55 years of age or older, willing to serve on a regular basis without compensation, and reside in Valencia County. They must also be willing to accept instruction and supervision as required.

After expressing an interest in volunteering through RSVP, potential volunteers are scheduled for interviews with project staff. All volunteers need to provide proof of age with an official document such as a driver's license, passport, birth certificate, or other official form of ID. RSVP volunteers will receive a job description for any position that is available.

### **Criminal History Checks**

Checks will be performed for all RSVP volunteer candidates. A criminal history background information check is the review of any and all records containing any information collected and stored in the criminal record repository of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the state Department of Public Safety, or any other repository of criminal history records, involving a pending arrest or conviction by a criminal justice agency, including, but not limited to: child abuse crime and sexual offense crimes information, conviction record information, fingerprint cards, correctional induction and release information, identifiable descriptions, and notations of convictions. Volunteers have the opportunity to challenge the accuracy of our findings.

### **Training and Orientation**

New volunteers receive orientation and initial training that covers the following: Orient volunteers to RSVP, the role of the sponsor (City of Belen), the Corporation for National & Community Service and NM Aging & Long-Term Services Department. Provide information about policies, time sheets, appeal procedures, insurance, possible reimbursement for expenses, the advisory board, RSVP staff, and more administrative details. Introduce volunteers to their volunteer station and other volunteers. Provide new volunteers with information about available community services related to their assignments.

Each volunteer station and RSVP staff will have a job description detailing the duties and responsibility of volunteers at that location. Each new volunteer will be given a copy of the job description for that site and an orientation will be administered at that time.

### **Training & Orientation continued...**

There are a variety of organizations that serve as volunteer stations so a volunteer is likely to find something that matches his/her interests. If a volunteer finds that the organization at which they volunteer is not to their liking, for whatever reason, RSVP staff can help to locate a different assignment to the volunteer's liking.

### **Volunteer Benefits Insurance**

All volunteers are automatically covered by RSVP's "Volunteers Insurance Service". Volunteers are covered by an insurance policy under the Corporation for National and Community Service, thru a contract with the CIMA Insurance Companies, Inc. The policy is issued by the QBE Insurance Co. This is a liability insurance which would cover excess accidental liability coverage, excess volunteer liability insurance, and excess automobile insurance. This information will be given to you when you come into the RSVP office, or you can get the link on our Belen website at <http://www.belen-nm.gov/departments/rsvp/rsvpSeniorSrvs.htm>

### **Reimbursement for Vehicle Mileage**

Depending on availability of funds, volunteers may receive reimbursement for mileage while going to and from your assignment from home, in your own vehicle reimbursement for miles driven ONLY applies to miles driven while in the boundaries of Valencia County. Travel for miles beyond the boundaries of Valencia County are not reimbursed. For example, a trip from Belen to Albuquerque is only reimbursable for the miles from Belen to the border between Valencia County and Bernalillo County, not all the miles from Belen to Albuquerque. All volunteer mileage must be written down and turned into the site manger. The amount of reimbursement made to RSVP volunteers is determined by the availability of funds and project policy regarding reimbursement of volunteer expenses.

Reimbursement of volunteers who drive their own vehicles is based on a cost per-mile rate set by the City of Belen. The rate is 25 cents per mile with the cap of \$60.00 per month.

A statement of actual miles driven must be included with your timesheet. Volunteers must work a minimum of 3 hours at the volunteer site on the day for which reimbursement is being requested, in order to be reimbursed.

In order to be eligible to be reimbursed for mileage, the volunteer must have a valid New Mexico driver's license and proof of current vehicle liability insurance coverage.



### Volunteer Stations

A volunteer station can be one of many types of organizations or agencies. Examples of volunteer stations include but are not limited to

- |                        |                     |                       |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| - Food Distributions   | - Domestic Shelters | - Senior Centers      |
| - Belen Public Library | - Nursing homes     | - Health Offices      |
| - Blood Drive          | - Community Center  | - Chamber of Commerce |

Each volunteer station must be licensed or otherwise certified, when required, by the appropriate state or local government. Informal groups do not qualify as volunteer stations. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a volunteer station includes detailed provisions to ensure compliance with program regulations regarding "No displacement of Employed Workers and No impairment of Contracts for Service." Private homes may not serve as volunteer stations except under special arrangements with a Letter of Agreement with RSVP.

### Volunteer Appreciation

Every year the Mid-Rio Grande RSVP holds a Recognition Luncheon to express our appreciation for the work and dedication of our volunteers. You will receive an invitation for this event a few weeks before it is held. All RSVP volunteers must be registered and have turned in hours at least three months prior to the luncheon. We hope you bring a guest. Please know there will be a cost per guest.

### Timesheets

All volunteers should file a timesheet (available from the RSVP office or online) on a monthly basis, listing their hours for the month. It can be faxed, mailed, or hand delivered to the RSVP office. Your time sheet must be turned in by the 10th day after the month for which you are filing. If a volunteer fails to report hours at least every three months, their status is changed to "inactive". Timesheets are critical to RSVP as they are a record to the sponsor, CNCS, and to grant writing organizations of the work that RSVP accomplishes, and demonstrates the depth of RSVP's involvement in the community. If there are any questions about filling out timesheets, contact the RSVP office. If a request is being made for reimbursement for mileage the statement with your timesheet when it is filed Reimbursement must be verified by signatures of the volunteer and the volunteer station supervisor.

### Prohibited Activities

- (1) Each volunteer station may have its own list of prohibited activities which need to be conveyed to the volunteer at the orientation for that site.
- (2) 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      Efforts to influence legislation

- (3) 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.
- (4) Neither the grantee nor any volunteer station requests or receives compensation from the beneficiaries of the Senior Corps volunteers.
- (5) Any volunteer station financial support of the Senior Corps project is not a precondition for that station to obtain volunteer service.
- (6) The Sponsor will withdraw services if a volunteer station's inability to provide monetary or in-kind support to the project under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) diminishes or jeopardizes the project's financial capabilities to fulfill its obligations.
- (7) A Senior Corps volunteer does not receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardian, or members of their family, or friends.
- (8) Grant funds are not used to finance labor or anti-labor organizations or related activity.
- (9) Laborers and mechanics employed for construction, alteration, or repair of facilities are paid prevailing rates as determined by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with the Davis-Bacon Act, as amended.
- (10) Project staff or volunteers **do not** give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in proselytizing as part of their duties and, if the sponsor is an organization that conducts inherently religious activities, those activities are offered separately, in time and location, from the programs or services funded under the Corporation grant.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

It is the policy of the Mid-Rio Grande RSVP that, with respect to any activity or program, no official of RSVP or any of its volunteer stations may discriminate against an RSVP volunteer on the basis of race; color; national origin, including limited English proficiency; sex; age; religion; or political affiliation; or on the basis of a disability, if the volunteer with a disability is qualified to serve.

### **Volunteer Separation**

A volunteer who does not serve on a regular monthly basis will become classified as inactive after 3 months, unless RSVP is otherwise informed of your working condition. A volunteer may be separated for cause, including, but not limited to, extensive or unauthorized absences, misconduct, inability to perform assignments or accept supervision, in accordance with the sponsor's policies. In such case, a volunteer may appeal such a separation.

### **Grievance Resolution Procedure**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Grievance Resolution Procedure is to secure, in an atmosphere of courtesy and cooperation, a prompt and equitable resolution of problems at the lowest possible administrative level which may arise within the course of volunteering. Grievances are formal written complaints of a volunteer concerning disciplinary action, imposed by supervisors, site Directors or by RSVP administrators. Grievances shall be limited to those matters, which fall exclusively within the purview of the rules and regulations of RSVP.

**Volunteers Covered** All volunteers of the RSVP except the RSVP paid staff shall be subject to the personnel policies and procedures. A volunteer may request in writing, within ten (10) working days after an incident to be excluded from the provisions of this Procedure. All positions except those specifically excluded shall be covered.

**Provisions for Volunteering** The provisions of these procedures of and under the RSVP bylaws herein established shall become a part of volunteering.

## **RSVP**

**Lead With Experience**

**Get Involved**

### **RSVP Community Advisory Council**

The RSVP staff is assisted by a seven member advisory council, plus an ex-officio member from the sponsor, the city of Belen. The council meets quarterly (March, June, September, & December) and any additional times as needed. The meetings are open to the public and all volunteers are welcome. The names of the advisory council members and other information can be obtained from the RSVP staff or you can go online to <http://www.belen-nm.gov/departments/rsvp/rsvpSeniorSrvs.htm>

The Council assists the RSVP staff in assessing community needs, helping with fund raising, working toward the development of a service ethic in the community, advising on recruitment of volunteers, and ways to recognize volunteers for their contribution, suggest potential volunteer stations, make suggestions for program projects and activities, and assess the work that RSVP is doing in its service area and the performance of the RSVP staff. The Council will also visit volunteer stations and talk to volunteers.

Contact information:

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