

Jefferson Parish Retired & Senior Volunteer Program

Joe S. Yenni Building
1221 Elmwood Park Blvd.
Suite 402
Jefferson, LA 70123

Program Handbook



**AmeriCorps
Seniors**

Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to the Jefferson Parish Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). As a RSVP Volunteer, you are joining one of the largest volunteer efforts in the nation.

Volunteers with Jefferson Parish RSVP have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of people in their community by participating in community service activities. RSVP offers a variety of different opportunities.

As a member of Jefferson Parish RSVP, you will be rewarded with many exciting opportunities to meet new people as well as help your community.

Please use this handbook to learn important information concerning this program.

Sincerely,
Jesse Gladney
RSVP Project Director

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of AmeriCorps Seniors is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement throughout service and volunteering.

VISION STATEMENT

As trusted stewards of Jefferson Parish's future, our employees/volunteers shall put the "Public First" and strive to provide the highest level of service across all aspects of our government.

I. WHAT IS RSVP?

The Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) started in 1969 when the Older Americans Act was amended to create this program under the auspices of the Corporation of National and Community Service. As of September 2020, The Corporation for National and Community Service has rebranded itself under AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps administers the federal funds that support the efforts of Jefferson Parish RSVP programs along with parish funding.

The RSVP Program promotes productive aging, providing individuals, age 55 and older, with meaningful work while utilizing them as community builders. RSVP Volunteers, through a wide variety of volunteer opportunities, provide significant cost savings to Jefferson Parish and make a significant impact on critical community needs.

The purpose of RSVP is to enrich retirement for adults through significant volunteer work at community centers, senior centers, hospitals, churches, and other organizations throughout Jefferson Parish. RSVP encourages seniors to bring a lifetime of talents and experience, skills, and hobbies to the community projects and organizations needing volunteer assistance. With the RSVP Project Director's help, the interest and skills of potential volunteers are assessed and matched with requests for service in community agencies and organizations.

Without the assistance and dedication of RSVP Volunteers, these community centers, senior centers, hospitals, and churches would be unable to continue many of their services. The needs of thousands of people in our parish would go unmet.

II. Who Is Eligible?

Jefferson Parish RSVP Volunteers must be 55 years of age or older, willing to volunteer regularly, accept instructions and supervision as required and live in Jefferson Parish. Eligibility to be an RSVP Volunteer is not based on education, income, experience, citizenship, race, creed, belief, color, national origin, sex, disability, or political affiliation.

III. Benefits of RSVP

RSVP Volunteers accrue various personal benefits that include greater community awareness, a widened social circle, improved health, morale and self-esteem, and a knowledge of existing services when they serve others. The following are tangible benefits that Jefferson Parish RSVP offers:

A. Insurance

RSVP Volunteers are provided a free package of excess (secondary) coverage for personal liability, accident, and auto that provides an extra measure of protection for volunteers (beyond the insurance you already have) during the hours you are serving. A Volunteer Guide to Accident and Liability Insurance is available for each volunteer.

B. Recognition

Recognition of Jefferson Parish RSVP Volunteers and their activities is viewed as an essential element of the program. Jefferson Parish RSVP holds an annual luncheon and volunteer celebration. The purpose of such events, and other forms of recognition, is to remind all Jefferson Parish RSVP Volunteers that their contributions to the community are genuinely appreciated by the citizens and agencies they serve.

IV. Volunteer Assignment and Stations

Collaboratively, the RSVP staff and local partner agencies have developed various assignments throughout Jefferson Parish, which includes opportunities that respond to significant community needs. Volunteers are matched to projects and stations according to their interests, abilities, preferences, and availability.

Some stations for volunteers:

- Churches
- Community Centers
- Non-profit Agencies
- Hospitals
- Senior Centers
- Special events throughout Jefferson Parish

V. Responsibilities of the Volunteer Station

1. Supervise volunteers and provide them with pre-service orientation and in-service training.
2. Provide for volunteer safety within the stations.
3. Report all accidents or insurance-related problems of volunteers to the RSVP office.

VI. Responsibility of the Volunteer

1. Participate in orientation and attend training provided by volunteer stations.
2. Be on time at the assigned volunteer sites.
3. Give as much notice as possible to his/her Station Supervisor/Coordinator if he/she will be absent.
4. Volunteers are responsible for keeping track of their own time on the RSVP Monthly Timesheet. The volunteer and/or the Station Supervisor must sign the timesheet. The signed timesheet must be returned to the RSVP Office by the 5th of every month via mail, email, or entered into the online volunteer system.
5. Notify the RSVP office when you change your contact information, wish to resign from the Volunteer Station, volunteer work somewhere else, or become ill and not volunteer for an extended period.
6. Any occurrence or problem at the Volunteer Station that causes the volunteer to feel uncomfortable or uneasy should be brought to the Project Director's attention immediately, always discussing issues or complaints with the Station Supervisor/Coordinator or RSVP Project Director than volunteers or station staff.

At Your Volunteer Station

When at the volunteer station, the volunteer will:

- Be responsible, dependable, and punctual
- Wear any uniform required by the station
- Inform station supervisor of your arrival
- Follow all policies and procedures at your chosen site
- ENJOY your volunteer experience!

VII. Confidentiality

Often, volunteers may come into the knowledge of personal matters or agency matters that must be kept confidential. Confidential agency matters must not be disclosed, even if names are not used in the conversation.

VIII. Nepotism Statement

Definitions

- **Immediate family member** - Includes an employee's spouse, child (step-children), child's spouse, sibling, sibling's spouse, parents (step-parents), grandparents, spouse's parents, and other blood relatives by marriage living in the same household.
- **Member of household** - Includes any individual residing in the same home as the employee.
- **Intimate relationship** - Includes relationships where persons are considered dating on a repeated basis, engaged, cohabitating, or deeming themselves domestic partners.

A member of an employee's immediate family, the employee's household, or a person with whom a parish employee has an intimate relationship, may be considered for employment, may be employed, and/or may be considered for a promotion or position within the parish, provided the individual possesses all the skills and qualifications for the position of employment.

Employment within parish government by immediate family members, members of the same household, or persons having an intimate relationship:

No member of a department head's immediate family may be employed to work within the same department.

No member of a department head's household may be employed to work within the same department.

An employee may continue with employment when a member of the employee's immediate family, household, or person with whom the employee has an intimate relationship is appointed as a department head, providing the employee has been employed within the department for one year before the appointment.

No supervisor may supervise a member of his or her immediate family, a household member, or an individual with whom the supervisor has an intimate relationship.

It is the responsibility of the employee to report any changes.

IX. Responsibilities of the RSVP Office

1. Provide a variety of volunteer opportunities.
2. Be available to assist with any problems the volunteer might have regarding his/her volunteer assignment.
3. Make necessary arrangements with the Volunteer Station Supervisor/Coordinator for placement of volunteers.
4. Be available for conference with volunteer and Station Supervisor/Coordinator when deemed necessary.
5. Work with the Station Supervisor/Coordinator and volunteers to assure hours contributed by volunteers are received and recorded in our office monthly.
6. Coordinate orientation and volunteer recognition opportunities to create a spirit of community among RSVP volunteers and stations.

X. Assignment Termination

The RSVP staff and volunteer sites will be alerted to changes or problems that may lead to assignment termination, such as when the relationship is no longer meaningful or satisfying to the RSVP volunteer or the volunteer site.

Regardless of the cause of the termination of an assignment, the RSVP Project Director and Volunteer Site Supervisor/Coordinator must make the decision jointly, with the full consideration given to the volunteer, including placement with another volunteer station, as appropriate.

An appeal can be made to the RSVP Project Director, who can decide to reinstate the volunteer with permission from the Station Supervisor/Coordinator, place the volunteer at a different volunteer site, or uphold the termination.

XI. Financial Activities

Any volunteer site financial support of AmeriCorps is not a precondition for that site to have volunteer service.

An AmeriCorps Senior volunteer should not receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardians, family members, or friends.

Grant funds should not be used to finance labor or anti-labor organizations or related activity.

XII. Grievance Policy

Jefferson Parish RSVP recognizes that not all volunteer assignments are without problems. At times, problems may arise that cannot be resolved by talking. The grievance procedure provides an RSVP volunteer with a means of presenting grievances without fear of reprisals. A volunteer can request a grievance meeting with the RSVP Project Director after discussing the problem without a satisfactory resolution with the Volunteer

Site Supervisor/Coordinator. The Project Director will try to find an acceptable resolution. If a sufficient resolution is not reached at this level, the volunteer may request, in writing, a meeting with the JeffCAP Administrative Staff.

XIII. Prohibited Activities

1. Volunteers and grantee staff should not engage in, and grantee funds should not be used for, any of the following activities, to the extent that they are prohibited in the applicable program regulations:
 - a. Electoral Activities
 - b. Voter Registration
 - c. Voter Transportation to Polls
 - d. Efforts to Influence Legislation
2. Volunteers should not engage in any activity that an employed worker would otherwise perform or which would supplant the hiring of or result in the displacement of employed workers or impair existing contracts for service.
3. Neither the grantee nor any volunteer station should request or receive compensation from the beneficiaries of AmeriCorps Senior volunteers.
4. Project Staff or volunteers should not give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in proselytization 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 AmeriCorps grant.

XIV. Policy for Volunteer Hours

Volunteers or Station Supervisor/Coordinators should turn in their hours by the 5th of each month in one of the following ways:

1. Submit hours online via the Jefferson Parish RSVP portal. If you do not have a username or password, please contact RSVP Project Director/Coordinator for this information.
2. Email completed timesheets (attendance) to jgladney@jeffparish.net
3. Send through interoffice mail or drop off completed community service hours (attendance):

JeffCAP RSVP Program
1221 Elmwood Pk. Blvd. Suite 402
Jefferson, LA 70123
Attn: Jesse Gladney
RSVP Project Director

XV. Policy for Tracking Hours

1. RSVP utilizes the Volunteer Reporter Program to maintain volunteer information and track volunteer hours. Only the Project Director/Coordinator has access to this program.
2. Volunteer applications and files are kept in a secured file cabinet at the RSVP office. Any computer databases containing volunteer records are password protected.
3. Monthly volunteer timesheets must be signed by volunteer and/or volunteer site staff and mailed, emailed, sent through interoffice mail, or brought to RSVP office. Timesheets are kept in a secured file cabinet in the RSVP office.

XVI. Discrimination Policy

Jefferson Parish RSVP complies with applicable federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination as embodied in the program regulations prohibiting discrimination based on race; color; national origin; including individuals with limited English proficiency; sex; age; political affiliation; sexual orientation; religion, or the basis of disability.

All Stations are accessible for people who have limited English proficiency.

All Stations are accessible to persons with mobility, hearing, vision, mental, and cognitive impairments or addictions and diseases.

Please notify the RSVP Project Director if specific conditions are needed to accommodate you.

XVII. RSVP Focus Areas & Work Plans

Focus Areas & Work Plans: RSVP programs across the country are aligning around seven focus areas determined by our federal grantor, AmeriCorps Seniors. Jefferson Parish Retired & Senior Volunteer Program is focused primarily on the following four broad areas, each having specific sub-areas (Focus Areas and Work Plans are subject to change):

1) Focus Area: Healthy Futures

a. Food and Obesity

- i. **Food Distribution:** RSVP Volunteers will serve in food banks by assisting with gleanings/soliciting donations, unloading deliveries, stocking shelves, preparing boxes, distributing food to clients, and supervising other volunteers.
- ii. **Education/Training:** RSVP Volunteers will help develop and/or participate in a grant funded healthy nutrition program, to supply Jefferson Parish residents, experiencing hardships, gift cards to local grocery stores and to offer nutritional guideline counseling/seminars to assist those individuals in making healthier food choices.
- iii. **Physical Activities:** RSVP Volunteers will coordinate and facilitate physical activities at local senior/community centers in an effort to provide companionship, socialization, and exercise.

2) Focus Area: Disaster Services

- a. **Disaster Preparedness:** RSVP Volunteers will help develop and/or execute disaster preparedness seminars/events and kits for the local community in an effort to increase community preparedness and community resiliency.

3) Focus Area: Economic Opportunity

a. Financial Literacy

- i. **Financial Literacy Education:** RSVP Volunteers will help support Financial Fitness Classes; providing Jefferson Parish citizens information on how to improve credit scores, maximize their monthly income, and improve their financial outlook to prepare for purchasing a home, retirement, etc. RSVP volunteers assist with the class registration process, conducting surveys, instruction, etc.
- ii. **Tax Preparation:** RSVP Volunteers will participate in the VITA Tax Program, providing tax assistance to Jefferson Parish citizens that are elderly/disabled and/or low-income. RSVP volunteers assist with the tax appointment scheduling, conducting surveys, filing tax returns for clients, and providing them with financial literacy information.

b. Housing

- i. **Housing Assistance:** RSVP Volunteers will support the Emergency Housing Assistance Program, providing Jefferson Parish citizens that are experiencing difficulties paying their rent/mortgage an opportunity to receive assistance to prevent eviction/foreclosure. RSVP volunteers assist with the appointment scheduling, conducting surveys, providing clients with HUD Fair Housing information, updating applicants on status, etc.

4) Other Community Priorities

- a. **Community Outreach:** RSVP Volunteers will help develop and/or coordinate various community outreach projects to address issues in an effort to increase community resiliency.