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Atlanta Regional Commission

Volunteer Application Packet

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Dear Prospective Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), Area Agency on Aging (AAA). We hope you will join us in our efforts to help older adults live healthy, independent lifestyles and encourage sustainable lifelong communities. This reading packet includes a brief overview of the Atlanta Regional Commission's volunteer programs.

After you read this packet, please proceed to the online application form or request a PDF.. We will contact you soon after receiving your completed application to follow up with you regarding volunteer positions and training opportunities for the programs or topics that interest you. .

If you have questions after reviewing the information, please feel free to contact me via telephone at 470-378-1466 or via email at tbrown@atlantaregional.org. In most cases, however, you will want to contact one of the program-specific ARC representatives listed below:

- Dana Heyl, Health and Wellness Workshops • dhey1@atlantaregional.org
- Nicola Williams, One2One • nwilliams@atlantaregional.org
- Cynthia Haley Dunn, Metro Atlanta RSVP • cdunn@atlantaregional.org

We appreciate your eagerness to serve our Metro Atlanta community.

Sincerely,

Tamika Brown
Volunteer Engagement Projects Manager
Atlanta Regional Commission, Area Agency on Aging

History of the Atlanta Regional Commission

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for one of the most dynamic metropolitan areas in the United States. It was created in 1971 by the local governments in the Atlanta region under legislation passed by the Georgia General Assembly. ARC brings public and private leaders serving the 10-county Atlanta region together to address mutual challenges and opportunities as well as issues of region-wide importance. ARC is the comprehensive planning agency in the areas of transportation, land use, environmental services, aging, community services, and job training.

In 1974, the Georgia Department of Human Resources designated the Atlanta Regional Commission as the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for the 10-county Atlanta region. As the Area Agency on Aging, ARC is charged with planning for the needs of a rapidly expanding group of older adults as well as implementing and coordinating many diverse programs. ARC meets this challenge by working closely with service agencies, representatives from the public and private sector, government officials, and senior adults.

About AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP

The mission of the metro Atlanta RSVP program is to provide adults over the age of 55 opportunities for civic engagement and community involvement around issues related to helping older adults and people with disabilities maintain healthy, independent lifestyles and encourage sustainable lifelong communities.

RSVP was established in 1971 and is now one of the largest senior volunteer organizations in the nation, engaging over 400,000 people age 55 and older in a diverse range of volunteer activities. ARC has served as an RSVP station since 2008..

About Health and Wellness Workshops

ARC trains volunteer lay leaders to facilitate small-group workshops which last from six to eight weeks. Topics include managing chronic conditions, diabetes self-management, managing chronic pain, A Matter of Balance, and Tai Chi for Falls Prevention. These are evidence-based programs, which means they have been researched and proven to make a difference in the health outcomes of participants. Workshops are offered online and in-person throughout the metro Atlanta area. Volunteers are not required to have a health background, and extensive training is provided.

About One2One

One2One is a phone-based outreach program designed to support at-risk adults over the age of 60 and people with disabilities who typically live alone, are homebound, and have little or no caregiver support. The program decreases social isolation and loneliness by providing ongoing companionship and support. Each individual is matched with a metro Atlanta volunteer who makes regular friendly phone calls.

Confidentiality and HIPAA Guidelines

(Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act 1996)

Overview:

The Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act directs health care providers, payers, and other “health care entities” to develop a comprehensive regulatory structure to:

- Formally notify individuals of privacy practices used in the health care system
- Implement privacy standards to safeguard protected health information (PHI)

Intentions of HIPAA:

- To implement the use of national standards
- To standardize electronic data transmittal
- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the health care system
- To protect the confidentiality and integrity of Protected Health Information (PHI)
- To reduce Fraud and Abuse

What is PHI?

- Any Individually Identifiable Health Information
- Name
- Address
- Telephone Numbers
- Medical diagnosis
- Medical Insurance Number
- Prescriptions
- Social Security Number
-

Why is protecting Individually Identifiable Health Information so important?

- To respect the dignity and self-worth of the individual
- To protect the individual from any actions of exploitation
- The individual has ownership of that information – it’s their “*right*” to disclose

Physical safeguards:

- Interview in a private setting whether via telephone or face to face
- Use appropriate voice tones
- Appropriate disposal of documentation and information (use of a paper shredder, removing copies from copy machine and fax)
- Appropriate storage of written/paper documents (file in the designated location, do not leave out for others to access)
- Appropriate use of electronic data (do not leave confidential information accessible on the computer screen when not present)

Background Check Policy for ARC Volunteers

To ensure the safety and well-being of clients, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), Area Agency on Aging (AAA) reserves the right to disqualify or restrict the duties of any person who has been convicted of certain crimes or who the ARC, in its sole discretion, based upon the information before it, otherwise deems as not qualified or fit to hold a volunteer position.

All prospective volunteers must complete and sign the Volunteer Background Check Consent Form to Release Information authorizing the RSVP Program or its agent to conduct a criminal history search or to conduct any other search deemed appropriate for the volunteer opportunity being considered. Without a completed and signed consent form, a person cannot serve in or be appointed to a volunteer position with ARC.

A criminal history search will be conducted on all potential ARC volunteers. The goal of this is to help protect and ensure the safety of its staff, clients, and other volunteers.

The criminal offenses that will generally disqualify a person from volunteer participation and the similar process used to determine disqualification are discussed on the following pages. The decision of whether to exclude or limit a prospective volunteer's participation remains at all times within the discretion of ARC. Factors that may be considered in making such determinations include, but are not limited to, the nature and severity of the criminal conduct and length of time since the criminal conduct occurred. ARC's primary concern is always to safeguard the best interests of its clients and staff.

Background Check Procedure for Volunteers

1. ARC has contracted with an external vendor to conduct background checks, which is composed of a criminal history search. All background checks will be conducted in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws.
2. The only volunteers who would not be required to go through the background check process are groups who are volunteering on an occasional basis, such as for a one-time event, or assisting ARC as needed, and would not be working independently, but under the supervision of a paid staff member.
3. Each prospective volunteer must complete and sign a **Consent for Criminal Background History Check Authorization and Release** form. This authorizes the release of information related to the individual to ARC and discloses information regarding the background check procedure to the potential volunteer.
4. Each prospective volunteer is expected to have direct contact with clients and is required to complete an **In-Direct Care Personal Background Check Registration Information** form.
 - a. The applicant's full name must be spelled out, and initials may not be used. This includes middle, maiden, and any other formerly used names. If you do not have a middle or maiden name, leave the Middle Name field blank.
 - b. A full Social Security Number is required.
 - c. The driver's license or State Identification Card information must include the number, state where it was issued, and the complete expiration date.
 - d. All requested dates on the Consent Form must include the month, date, and year.

This form must be fully and accurately completed before a background check can be initiated. Failure to do so will result in the form being returned and will cause the application approval process to be delayed.

5. Providing false information or omitting relevant information on the application or release form is grounds for exclusion from participation as a volunteer for ARC's volunteer program, regardless of the result of the background check.
6. Information obtained from a background check will be assessed in light of the nature and requirements of the volunteer position sought and any general minimum qualification standards applicable to all volunteers. Information obtained from a background check must remain confidential and may be revealed only on a "need to know" basis.

Disqualification from Volunteer Participation

The following rules generally will apply if ARC learns (via criminal background check or otherwise) that a prospective or current volunteer has been convicted of one of the following crimes under the laws of the state of Georgia, another state, or the United States. At all times, ARC has the discretion to exclude or limit a prospective volunteer's participation as a result of other non-criminal information.

1. Grounds for Disqualification:

- Any felony offense, regardless of the type
- Misdemeanor crime against a child or older adult
- Misdemeanor crime involving theft, fraud or forgery
- Misdemeanor crime involving the use of weapons
- Misdemeanor crime involving violence
- Misdemeanor crime involving arson
- Misdemeanor crime of public indecency
- Other misdemeanors, as the ARC, RSVP, or the station may determine.

2. Unresolved Situations: If there is an open warrant for the arrest of the applicant, or there is a pending charge with no disposition, that application cannot be approved, and the volunteer cannot be placed until the situation has been satisfactorily resolved and the criminal background check report updated. If the applicant has already begun to serve in a volunteer capacity, his or her participation must be suspended pending disposition of the case or resolution of the open warrant.

3. Other Circumstance and General Principles: For all other criminal offenses, including traffic violations classified as misdemeanors, ARC shall review the applicant's situation on a case-by-case basis. A prospective volunteer may be disqualified due to non-criminal information such as negative references.

Ultimately, the decision of whether to allow volunteer participation shall be within the absolute and exclusive discretion of ARC.