

CHAPTER 7
RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (RSVP)

817—7.1(15H) Purpose and program description. The purpose of the retired and senior volunteer program (RSVP) is to identify and address priority community needs through the mobilization of adult volunteers aged 55 and over, thereby recognizing and using the competence, wisdom and experience of this age group for the benefit of all Iowans. RSVP grants will give support to each RSVP project serving Iowa and provide discretionary grants on a competitive basis for RSVP project expansion. The commission administers two types of RSVP grants:

7.1(1) *RSVP grant.* Each RSVP project which has a current notice of grant award to operate an RSVP project from the Corporation for National and Community Service (the federal domestic volunteer agency) is to be allocated a share of state funds appropriated for distribution. Each RSVP project shall submit to the commission a budget outlining the method by which the project will expend the grant allotted to the project and other information as requested by the commission.

7.1(2) *State-developed RSVP project grants.* From state funds appropriated by the legislature, RSVP projects will be developed that are consistent with the goals of the Corporation for National and Community Service, RSVP and the commission. After a review by the grant review committee pursuant to subrule 7.4(3), grants will be awarded on a competitive basis by the commission and the Corporation for National and Community Service to local organizations or groups to initiate new RSVP projects. Decisions to make state funding available for new state-developed programs or existing program expansions must be approved by the commission.

[ARC 1882C, IAB 2/18/15, effective 7/1/15]

817—7.2(15H) Applications. Appropriate forms and applications for each grant are available from the commission or the Corporation for National and Community Service.

817—7.3(15H) Grant criteria. To respond to funding priorities, as funds are made available, the executive director of the commission and the state director of the Corporation for National and Community Service will coordinate in establishing criteria for the awarding of state-developed funds. At a minimum, the criteria will contain the following:

1. Goals and objectives of the project;
2. The qualifications of the applicant to manage funds;
3. Letters of local support verifying coordination and cooperation and the need for volunteers;
4. Total project budget;
5. Evidence of ability to submit timely and accurate reports;
6. Description and time line of planned activities;
7. Agreement to develop for the project a community partnership group whose membership should include a cross section of the community served;
8. Description of the applicant organization, including staffing pattern; and
9. Documentation of the applicant's ability to provide the required local match.

817—7.4(15H) Application process for new state-developed project grants.

7.4(1) The commission or the Corporation for National and Community Service shall issue a request for proposals containing project criteria and application instructions based on the most recent application instructions or notice of funding opportunity for RSVP that is available from the Corporation for National and Community Service for the appropriate fiscal year.

7.4(2) The applicant shall submit the completed application to the commission according to the time line identified in the request for proposals.

7.4(3) Applications submitted will be reviewed by a grant review committee, which is composed of up to two representatives of each of the following: the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Iowa commission on volunteer service, and the citizens of Iowa. Using the criteria in rule 7.3(15H), the committee will review the applications for appropriateness and to determine the merit of the project.

7.4(4) Applicants whose projects have been selected for funding shall be notified by the commission.

7.4(5) The commission will contract with the approved applicant(s) for the appropriate fiscal year, July 1 to June 30.

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817—7.5(15H) Administration of grants. The commission shall prepare contractual agreements for the grants.

7.5(1) Execution of contract. The contract shall be executed by the executive director of the commission and the duly authorized official of the local RSVP project.

7.5(2) Contract requirements. The contract shall include due dates and the process for the submission of project reports and financial reports.

7.5(3) Reporting. All grant recipients shall submit biannual progress and financial reports to the Corporation for National and Community Service and provide these reports to the commission. Beginning in state fiscal year 2015, RSVP projects will report to the commission, with each payment request, the number of active volunteers serving in the prior period. RSVP projects will also report to the commission the number of persons provided with volunteer management resources, such as training, best practices, and materials, and the number of persons who report that the training increased their knowledge of effective volunteer management practices.

7.5(4) Distribution of funds. The base-level formula for distribution of funds for established programs will be based on the prior fiscal year's state funding levels. When applicable, any relinquished funds will be distributed based on the current fiscal year's distribution formula. New programs that are not state-developed will begin at the base funding level for RSVP grants established by the commission.

Beginning in state fiscal year 2016, distribution of state funds will include an established maximum average cost per volunteer as determined by the commission on an annual basis. The maximum cost per volunteer will be set one year in advance. If the commission does not establish a new rate, the prior rate remains in effect. The average cost per volunteer calculation is based on the number of volunteers divided by the sum of awarded state plus federal funds. Any program that exceeds the maximum cost at the time of the January biannual progress report may have subsequent grant awards reduced to comply with this threshold. Additional funds that are not awarded due to these reductions will be retained by the commission for up to two years to be used to support RSVP training designed to increase volunteer recruitment and retention. If, after two years, the project from which the funds have been retained has not met the maximum cost per volunteer threshold, the funds will be distributed to projects that are below the maximum volunteer cost threshold with the understanding that the funds are provided on a one-year basis. The commission may grant a temporary exception to the maximum cost requirement for new projects or in the case of financial or other hardship.

7.5(5) Training. Up to 1.5 percent of funds designated for RSVP grants may be retained by the commission for training and technical assistance for RSVP project directors and members.

7.5(6) Administrative funds. The commission or any other state agency may not retain RSVP grant funds for administration or any other purpose not designated pursuant to this chapter.

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817—7.6(15H) Reversion of funds. Grant funds not expended by the project by June 30 shall revert to the commission.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 15H.2(3) "i."

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