



Volunteer Policies and Procedures

5211 W. Broad St., Suite 102
Richmond, VA 23230
804-288-9930

www.readcenter.org

frontdesk@readcenter.org

Office Hours:
Monday – Friday
9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Welcome to READ RVA

Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to READ RVA! We are delighted you have chosen to volunteer your time with us. We understand your time is valuable and are honored you are willing to spend some of it with us. Each and every day, our organization depends on volunteers like you to ensure we operate efficiently and successfully to serve our students. Volunteers at READ RVA do everything from tutoring students and substitute teaching classes, to attending community and outreach events. In short, READ RVA could not operate without dedicated volunteers like you.

The Volunteer Policies and Procedures document provides answers to many of the questions you may have about READ RVA's volunteer program. You are responsible for reading, understanding, and adhering to READ RVA's policies and procedures. If anything is unclear, please discuss the matter with the Education Program Manager.

On behalf of our staff, students, and everyone here at READ RVA, we welcome you to our volunteer program. Thank you for dedicating your time to help adults with low-literacy levels develop the skills they need to fulfil their roles as citizens, workers, and family members.

Sincerely,

Chris Miller
Director of Programs

Mission and History

MISSION:

READ RVA expands opportunities and empowers adults through literacy education.

VISION:

A community in which all adults have a literate life.

WHO WE ARE:

READ RVA, formerly known as The READ Center, is a community-based nonprofit organization which has been providing educational opportunities to adults with low-level reading and communication skills for more than 36 years. READ RVA was founded as the Literacy Council of Metropolitan Richmond in 1982 by Altrusa International Richmond, Inc., a professional women's business service club and became a 501(c)(3) organization in 1984. READ RVA is funded by individuals, community organizations, foundations, businesses, Chesterfield and Henrico Counties, and the city of Richmond.

WHAT WE DO:

READ RVA's mission is accomplished by providing classroom instruction, one-to-one tutoring, an adult literacy curriculum, and educational resources to support students.

WHY WE DO IT:



The ability to read is something most of us take for granted. It is something we assume every adult can do, but that is not true. In the United States an estimated 48 million adults cannot read, write or do basic math above a third-grade level. In the greater Richmond region, the estimate is over 100,000 adults who lack these skills.

Every important issue is impacted by literacy – health, employment, housing, parenting, education, and civic engagement. The inability to read creates huge barriers for adults trying to function in our society. Low literacy traps families in cycles of low-educational attainment and poverty that is hard to break.

WHO WE SERVE:

We serve English speaking adults 18 years of age and older who are reading below an 8th grade equivalency. Our students are parents, grandparents, employees and employers, world travelers, home-owners and neighbors. They are creative, resourceful, courageous and brave. They are dedicated students who want to improve their reading skills.

Expectations

What You Can Expect from READ RVA

- To receive a clear and specific job description;
- To be given appropriate assignments according to your skills, interests, availability, and training;
- To be given appropriate formal and informal expressions of recognition;
- To receive orientation, training, support, and supervision for the jobs you accept and know why you are being asked to do a task;
- To receive feedback regarding tutor evaluations;
- To receive prompt attention from READ RVA staff for any concern that may arise;
- To be recognized for your hard work and time you give to READ RVA through volunteer celebrations, special events, and more.

What READ RVA Expects from You

- To be respectful of students, teachers, staff, and other volunteers;
- To know your duties and how to execute them correctly;
- To communicate with READ RVA staff and cooperate with your fellow volunteers;
- To take advantage of professional development, including trainings and social/networking events that are offered to you, and to share any professional development opportunities you become aware of;
- To support the safe and pleasant learning environment READ RVA strives to build;
- To help READ RVA improve programs and volunteer experiences by providing regular feedback.

Policies and Procedures

Attendance

Volunteers are critical to serving READ RVA students. If you are regularly absent or arrive late, you will not be able to fulfill our obligations to our students. In classes, please report any absences or late arrivals to the teacher at least one day in advance, if possible. As a one-to-one tutor, please contact your student directly at least one day in advance. More than two absences or late arrivals that have not been pre-arranged may be cause for dismissal.

Inclement Weather Procedures/ office closings

READ RVA is listed with WRIC, local channel 8 news, for weather or other office closings. Please check the READ RVA academic calendar for holidays and semester break closings.

Commitment

Assignments to a classroom or location are based on student enrollment and are not guaranteed from year-to-year. The volunteer commitment is two hours per week for one year. At the end of each academic year, volunteers complete a survey to provide feedback and advise staff if they can continue into the next year. After two-years of service in an assignment, volunteers are encouraged to continue challenging themselves by transitioning to a new opportunity such as: one-to-one tutoring, entering a new classroom, or substitute teaching. If you find your schedule has changed, contact the Program Manager to determine if there are opportunities on a different day/time that may fit with your new schedule.

Reporting Pair Hours for One-to-Ones

Monthly Progress Reports for one-to-one tutors are due no later than the last day of the month. Submission of reports is required for all one-to-one pairs. The process may be completed through the form on READ RVA website. These forms are the primary resource for READ RVA to measure one-to-one student success. Full and complete lesson plans and reports are crucial to helping students achieve their goals. More than two missing or late reports could be cause for your pair to be dissolved.

Communication and Information Sharing

READ RVA uses technology to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our programs. READ RVA's primary method of communication is email, and all volunteers must be willing and able to use email for communication. READ RVA staff is always accessible to volunteers via email and telephone.

Open communication is mandatory. It is essential that you notify READ RVA staff of breaks from tutoring, relocation of one-to-one meeting space, time or day changes, as well as program feedback and any concerns.

Volunteer Background Screening

READ RVA values the safety of its volunteers, students, and staff. READ RVA uses Sterling Volunteers for our volunteer background checks. Procedures will be provided during training

Confidential Information

Your volunteer service with READ RVA assumes an obligation to maintain confidentiality and respect privacy. As a volunteer, you may be privy to information that is confidential in nature, such as names and personal information about students and volunteers. In addition, you may have access to proprietary or privileged information involving staff, volunteers, students, or partner sites. Such information cannot be shared with family, friends, acquaintances, or the general public. Disclosure of confidential information will lead to dismissal.

During virtual tutoring, a student's home and personal life may be on display. Photographs, screenshots, or audio recordings are not allowed during virtual tutoring.

Tutoring Locations

One-to-one tutoring must take place in a public space that is observable by others. Tutoring may also take place over the phone or through remote video conferencing platforms. Home tutoring is not permitted under any circumstances.

Transportation

Volunteers and students are expected to provide their own transportation. Transportation of a student by a tutor in a vehicle or transportation of a tutor by a student in a vehicle for any activity directly or indirectly related to READ RVA is prohibited for reasons of liability. READ RVA is not liable for any conduct of tutor or student outside of the scope of READ RVA's policies on transportation.

Harassment

As a READ RVA volunteer, you are responsible for keeping our learning environment free of harassment. Harassment may include intimidation, hostility, unwelcome sexual advances, or other offenses which may interfere with volunteer performance. Any volunteer who becomes aware of an incident of harassment against a student, a teacher, or another volunteer, whether by witnessing the incident or being told of it, **must** report it to any READ RVA staff member with whom they feel comfortable.

Self-Determination

Exercising self-determination requires that learners know what the instructional resources and choices are and the consequences of selecting any of them. They shall not be placed in a position of clear or present risk to themselves or others.

No Soliciting

READ RVA is obligated to respect and encourage the learners' rights to make their own decisions, identify their own needs, and choose the most appropriate option when faced with possible courses of action. READ RVA staff and volunteers are prohibited from soliciting, political campaigning, and/or efforts to convert, persuade, or force a READ RVA adult learner to another religion or a religious doctrine.

Dress Code and Personal Appearance

Appropriate grooming and personal cleanliness are expected of all staff, students, and volunteers. The dress code is casual and comfortable, but we ask your attire to be neat and conservative. If staff feels your attire is out of place, you may be asked to change into proper attire. If you are tutoring at a partner location like the Richmond City Justice Center, please refer to their dress code requirements. Please do not wear attire with offensive language or logos.

Alcohol & Drug Use

READ RVA believes that alcohol and drug abuse adversely affect volunteer performance, the work environment, and confidence in the organization. We will take immediate action against volunteers who use, distribute, or possess controlled substances while performing volunteer functions for READ RVA. Any volunteer who violates this alcohol and drug policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate discharge.

Diversity and Equal Opportunity

READ RVA is committed to diversity and inclusion in the workplace and provides consideration for employment without regard to race, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, or protected veteran status. We value, champion, and embrace diversity as an integral part of our organization. We will strive to ensure that volunteers and staff broadly reflect the diversity of the community.

Office Equipment and Facilities Use

If something is necessary for the efficient undertaking of your responsibilities as a tutor, and it has not been provided by READ RVA, please contact your teacher or the Program Manager. Office supplies like the copier, staplers, paper, paper clips, folders, pencils, and markers are available for use with discretion.

If you would like to meet with your one-to-one student or look for resources in the Tutor/Learner library space at READ RVA, please contact the office to schedule a time.

Professional Development

READ RVA recognizes that our volunteers are one of our greatest resources. Participation in at least two (2) professional development opportunities per academic year is strongly encouraged. These opportunities can be through READ RVA sponsored in-person or online workshops and trainings, as well as opportunities you may come across through your own research. Completion of professional development opportunities should be reported to the Program Manager for tracking. Volunteers interested in leading professional development sessions should contact the Program Manager.

Textbook Policy

Once being paired one-to-one with a student; each tutor will receive a copy of the textbook **LITSTART: Strategies for Adult Literacy**. Volunteers who are not paired one-to-one but would like a copy may purchase a book for \$25.

Tutors will be lent teacher's manuals for their student's core texts. Please do not write in the teacher's manuals. When students complete texts or leave the program, tutors must return their teacher's manuals and all other materials that belong to READ RVA unless they wish to purchase them. Tutors will receive the next manuals in exchange for the manual returned.

Feedback

In addition to yearly volunteer satisfaction surveys, READ RVA welcomes and encourages regular feedback from volunteers. Our volunteers spend many hours in classrooms and with students, and we value their perspectives. Questions, comments, and concerns from volunteers help us think of new ways to innovate programming for our students. Should you have an idea or something to discuss, please contact the Program Manager by calling (804) 288-9930.

Zero Tolerance Policy

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules, policies, and procedures of READ RVA or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be dismissed until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the dismissal with the Program Manager—unless there is just cause. READ RVA reserves the right to dismiss a volunteer without appeal in order to protect students, staff, and volunteers. Reasons for immediate dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Solicitation
- Breach of confidentiality
- Harassment or failure to report harassment
- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Abuse or mistreatment of students, staff, or fellow volunteers