



Volunteer Support Group Leader Description

Thank you for considering a volunteer position as a Support Group Leader for the Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS) Foundation. Listed below are the responsibilities you will need to perform as a Support Group Leader. If you would like to partner with the Foundation and perform this role, please fill out the Volunteer Application and send to Chiara Corey at: Restless Legs Syndrome Foundation, 3006 Bee Caves Road, Suite D206, Austin, TX 78746 or email it to: chiara@rls.org.

Role of a Support Group Leader:

To support the RLS Foundation's goals. These goals are to increase awareness of RLS, improve treatments, and through research, find a cure for RLS. Support Group Leaders will do this by developing meetings and facilitating discussions to share experiences with people who have RLS, those who are affected by RLS, or those who have an interest in RLS. Support Group Leaders will work with the Foundation to provide current information about treatment and ways to communicate with healthcare providers.

The Foundation will provide support for your meeting through our volunteer manual containing guides to help plan for your group. In addition, the Foundation promotes meetings through our website, social media and targeted e-newsletter announcements. The Foundation is here to support your group, however, it is up to the group leader to set up meeting logistics and to determine how frequent meetings and group activity will be. A volunteer must be proactive, capable of problem solving, patient, and compassionate.

Function of a Support Group:

A Restless Legs Syndrome support group is an informal gathering of people who share a common medical condition. It is a treasury of practical experience. It is a place where you can be yourself and be with other people who will listen and understand. Its main purpose is to offer mutual support and to share information.

Requirements:

1. Must apply and meet the requirements to be accepted into the program. This includes an application, signed agreements, and orientation training provided by RLS staff.
2. Arrange and hold at least ONE support group meeting a year and submit Activity Report(s) after each meeting.
3. Must have e-mail address and internet access through a cell phone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer. You must respond to inquiries in a timely fashion through all channels.
4. Must allow use of your name, phone number and Foundation email address in *NightWalkers* and on the Foundation's website.
5. Keep the Foundation informed of any updates in your contact information.
6. Keep the Foundation informed of potential problems, and successes in regards to support group meetings/topics etc.
7. Refer to RLS Foundation publications and website. The Foundation will provide you with publications for your meetings.
8. Present clearly that any information you provide is not medical or treatment advice.
9. Review and follow guidelines provided in the RLS Volunteer Manual.
10. Participate in the annual awareness campaign (September 23), in addition to other Foundation events.

Recommendations:

1. Be willing to devote time, energy and talents to disperse reliable information at support group meetings and provide a forum that is supportive of individuals who have RLS.
2. Have a focus for your meeting. It could be a speaker or planned program or just a general sharing of experiences. It is important to remain flexible to keep the interest of those attending the meetings.
3. Provide literature and information through RLS posters, newspaper articles, radio spots, etc. to educate the general population. This could possibly help draw people to the support group meetings.
4. Send out reminders of meetings to attendees and anyone who has expressed an interest in attending a meeting. The Foundation will assist in promotion of your meeting.
5. Find a healthcare provider to be an advisor in your area. This advisor will be a support for medical driven questions and may assist with presenter topics and speakers.