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### **Executive Summary**

An estimated 380 volunteers will serve through the Concho Valley RSVP program, with 176 serving in the Primary Focus Area, Healthy Futures. They will serve in all three objectives under the Healthy Future Focus Area -- Aging in Place, Obesity and Food and Access to Care. They will: deliver food to the homebound and/or older adults and individuals with disabilities; provide transportation to the VA clinic for older and disabled veterans; provide transportation to medical appointments and grocery shopping for homebound and/or older adults and those with disabilities; help feed food-insecure children lunch during the summer months when no other resources are available, serve in food banks and at food pantries and they will provide eye health information for small children. This service will be provided through 11 placement sites, such as Meals on Wheels, Faith in Action, Sunset Senior Center Home Delivered Meals, Helping Hands for the Elderly, Concho Valley Regional Food Bank, Project Dignidad Food Pantry, Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, and Kids Eat FREE. At the end of the three- year grant period 250 homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities will receive food, transportation or other services that allow them to live independently. The CNCS federal investment of \$102, 354 will be supplemented by \$46,275 of non-federal resources.

### **Strengthening Communities**

The Concho Valley (CV) is a rural, sparsely populated region of West Texas, largely dependent on agribusiness and petroleum. The Concho Valley RSVP serves 7 counties (Coke, Crockett, McCulloch, Menard, Schleicher, Sutton, and Tom Green) of the CV covering 10,886 square miles with a combined population of 135,377. San Angelo, the location of the RSVP program office, is the only urban area. 19,929 individuals from these 7 counties are over the age of 65 or almost 15%, with one county at 24% for those over age 65. According to the Concho Valley Area Agency on Aging's current Area Plan, "The twin phenomena of aging-in-place and out-migration of young people in rural communities has led to the counties having this high percentage of older populations with multiple needs." Geographic

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isolation serves to further the challenges to provide service in rural areas, along with the aging demographics, and over the past two years, a major drought has added to the economic downturn for a population very dependent on agribusiness. At the time of this writing many of the counties are already in the most severe drought stage where all outside watering is being eliminated to preserve the water left for personal usage.

The ethnicity varies from county to county, but for Tom Green County with a population of 110,224 the breakdown is 58% White, 35% Hispanic, 4% Black and 3% other. Poverty levels range from a low of 12% in Sutton County to a high of 23% in McCulloch County with poverty for the total population of the Concho Valley Service area averaging 16.2%. For children 18 and younger the poverty rates average 22.4%, with McCulloch having a child poverty level of 32.4% and Tom Green, Coke and Crockett counties at 24% or above. The decline in the economy, the increase in the number of older residents, and the high percentage of children living in poverty who are food insecure, all demonstrate the need for non-profit programs and volunteers to meet many needs. Also an increase in the need for, and a decrease in the budgets for many non-profits will make them even more dependent on the services of RSVP volunteers. Because of today's dwindling financial resources, the prudent development of the RSVP volunteer service force has become essential to meeting community needs in many areas.

An article in the San Angelo Standard Times on September 12, 2012, contained the following quote from Patti Breitreider, CEO of the United Way of the Concho Valley supporting the local need for services. "Here in the Concho Valley, 5,039 children and 2,057 senior citizens rely on food stamps. More than 4,000 people exist below the national poverty level. More than 3,500 grandparents are raising their grandchildren and 380 babies were born to teen mothers. Children confirmed to be victims of child abuse numbered 815. Eighteen percent of adults are functionally illiterate.

The Primary Focus Area for CVRSVP is the Healthy Futures Focus Area with volunteer service

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activities to include: providing meals to food insecure children during the summer months through the Kids Eat FREE summer feeding program; supporting seniors' ability to remain living independently in their own home through food delivery and transportation; and food distribution, food pantry support and eye health information for small children.

(HEALTHY FUTURES - Kids Eat FREE documentation) The "Children of the Concho Valley Social Health Project" is research conducted by Angelo State University Community Development Initiatives Department. This research mirrors the KidsCount national index at the local level, but also incorporates additional factors, not available in the national KidsCount index that are of interest to the communities of the Concho Valley. A quote from this report states: "According to the Census Bureau, nearly a quarter of our region's children were living in poverty in 2009. In 2009, only five states had higher estimated percentages of children living in poverty than Texas did. In addition, the percentage of children living in poverty, for the year, exceeded the rate for all states by about four percentage points. Thus, our region's level of child poverty also exceeded that of the nation. The increase in poor children is placing an even heavier burden on an already strained network of private charities and agencies already twisting in the wind because of inadequate funding, and staffing shortages." Locally 60% of all children enrolled in San Angelo schools meet the requirement for free or reduced lunches. During the school year food-insecure (households that cannot afford to consistently and properly feed themselves because their incomes do not meet the cost of living) children receive the free or reduced lunches in the school cafeterias and the Junior League and Food Bank provide take home food for the week-ends in backpacks for children who have little or no food. During the summer months however, when school is not in session, many of these children are food insecure. According to the Economic Research Service, USDA, Nov. 2009, "Texas has the nation's highest rate of food insecurity in children...the overall health, mental well-being and academic outcomes of Texas children suffer. Food security--access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life--is an important foundation for

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good nutrition and health. Food security is especially important for children because the nutritional content of their diets affects not only their current health, but also their physical, mental, and social development--and thus their future health and well-being." This illustrates just how important proper nutrition is not only for health purposes, but also for academic learning, with local teachers confirming this. Kids Eat FREE was started by two RSVP volunteers as a grass-roots effort under the Texas Hunger Initiative in 2010. This past year 73 RSVP volunteers, representing a diverse section of the community in relation to ages, gender, ethnicity, race, faith, and military/veterans, were involved in everything from development and fund raising to food purchase, cooking, site management, and serving children. The sites for the meals are located in neighborhoods where the percentage of children receiving free or reduced lunches is at least 65%. The output for this community need will be H11, the number of individuals receiving support, services, education and/or referrals to alleviate long-term hunger.

In May of this year CVRSVP was notified that the effective practice they submitted for Kids Eat-FREE had been chosen for replication by The Aging Network's Volunteer Collaborative and CVRSVP received \$10,000 to promote replication of this practice. The National Resource Center for Engaging Volunteers in the Aging Network (rebranded as The Aging Network's Volunteer Collaborative last week), funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging, launched a call for "What's Working" across the Aging Network to leverage the social capital of older adults through volunteer initiatives. Through a competitive process they accepted applications on effective practices from across the country for a chance to receive funding to replicate what's working. From the many entries packed with valuable knowledge, they chose 13 programs including Kids Eat FREE, which have produced exceptional results and may be the most applicable to the widest range of volunteer programs.

(HEALTHY FUTURES -Homebound Meal Delivery & Transportation documentation) The Concho Valley Area Agency on Aging (AAA), in their latest local needs assessment, identified transportation,

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in-home services and home delivered and congregate meals as priority needs for the elderly to help maintain their independence. According to the Meals on Wheels Association of Texas -- "In 2008, 8.9% of all Texas Seniors were food-insecure and at risk of hunger while the national average was only 5.7%. Only Mississippi, South Carolina, and Arkansas ranked below Texas." The three major programs RSVP Volunteers serve in to support independent living for elderly home bound clients and the disabled are through Meals for the Elderly (MftE) and Faith in Action (FiA) in Tom Green County; through Sunset Center in Brady, McCulloch County; and through Helping Hands for the Elderly in Ozona, Crockett County. Through FiA RSVP Volunteers provide transportation along with telephone reassurance. Through the MftE program RSVP volunteers provide a home delivered hot nutritious lunch five days a week and sack lunch on Friday of each week to assist the recipients in getting through the weekend. Frozen meals are also provided for evenings and weekends for recipients who depend solely on MftE for their meals. Through the Sunset Center and Helping Hands for the Elderly CVRSVP volunteers deliver a hot daily lunch. CVRSVP volunteers use their own vehicles and gas for all the deliveries and also provide a daily check on the well-being of the meal recipients, helping to obtain timely assistance in the case of a medical emergency. Many times, the volunteer is the only human contact the client has on a daily basis. Surveys have indicated that this interaction is almost as important as the meal received. Meals for the Elderly states, "Good nutrition helps improve the health and well-being of the elderly, and improves their quality of life. It is our goal to enable the elderly to live independently, in their own homes, for as long as possible. The typical recipients are over seventy years of age, live alone, and are unable to prepare their own meals." There are 5,170 individuals 80+ living in the counties where RSVP volunteers deliver meals to homebound frail elderly and clients with disabilities. This population continues to grow, as does the 70+ population, putting a strain on Meal Delivery programs both in the area of financial need and volunteer needs, especially with food and gas costs increasing. The case/program managers, social workers and volunteer

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coordinators for the home delivered meal programs have conducted an in-home assessment of 700+ clients and documented their need and qualification for the services. It has only been over the past 18 months that Meals on Wheels began tracking veterans on new client intake forms and from that client base 72 veterans have been identified as receiving home delivered meals. Due to the age of the client base receiving home delivered meals we know this number will be much higher. CVRSVP is going to collaborate with the MftE social worker/case manager to identify how many veterans were being served prior to this documentation and also how many family members of veterans are being served.

The mission of Faith in Action (FiA), located at AAA, is to create a caring community of volunteers who offer support services to frail/elderly and physically disabled adults enabling them to live independently and with dignity. FiA brings together religious congregations of many faiths, and other community organizations in a common mission to provide volunteer services to promote independence with the number one service provided by RSVP volunteers being transportation to medical appointments and grocery shopping. According to the data provided by the FiA Program Manager 179 of the 339 active clients are either veterans or veterans' family members, which is 53% of those served. All volunteers serving through FiA must go through an initial training. The training held in August of 2012 was for active military members who are going to serve as community volunteers along-side RSVP Volunteers. Active military members are already serving FiA, but this was the first training for just military members. The Output for these Aging in Place services will be H8 - Number of homebound older adults and individuals with disabilities receiving food, transportation, or other services that allow them to live independently and the Outcome H9 - Number of homebound adults and individuals with disabilities who reported having increased social ties/perceived social support.

(HEALTHY FUTURES - Food Pantries, Soup Kitchen, Food Bank) The chairman of the Concho

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Valley Homeless Planning Coalition said "the Texas Homeless Network estimates the Tom Green County homeless population at 470." This fact plus the economic downturn, along with the poverty rates stated earlier in the demographic section of Strengthening Communities supports the need to provide services to clients who meet poverty guidelines through food pantries and agencies such as the Food Bank, Project Dignidad, Daily Bread Soup Kitchen and Coke County Food Pantry where RSVP volunteers serve. RSVP volunteers will help stock pantry shelves, screen applicants as per agency requirements, and dispense food product to the clients. The output for this community need will be H11 - the number of individuals receiving support, services, education and/or referrals to alleviate long-term hunger.

(Healthy Futures - Children's Eye Health Information) Statistics show that less than 15% of all preschool children receive an eye exam, and fewer than 22% receive any type of vision screening or eye health information. RSVP volunteers help provide eye screenings in local schools, results are read by an optometrist with parents of children receiving information on possible follow-up if needed. The Output is H2 Number of clients to whom information on health insurance, health care access and health care benefits programs is delivered.

Productivity, high performance, positive attitudes and good morale for volunteers result from an effective volunteer management system which the Concho Valley RSVP program has in place. To manage the RSVP volunteers and their stations as a highly effective means of addressing the needs CVRSVP has identified in the Primary Focus Area a RSVP Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be negotiated, signed and discussed with all agencies prior to placement of RSVP Volunteers. This document establishes working relationships and program requirements. It outlines the specific responsibilities and requirements for both the station and CVRSVP respectively and highlights mutual responsibilities. The MoU identifies the primary station staff person responsible for day-to-day supervision of RSVP volunteers, provisions for safety of the volunteers, assurances that the station will

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not discriminate against RSVP volunteers and will provide reasonable accommodation(s) for persons with disabilities. CVRSVP will work with the identified primary station staff person to discuss incorporating the abilities, experience, and needs of senior volunteers in their programs and operations. CVRSVP volunteers serving through these Healthy Future assignments will receive a background check by the agencies if required, receive orientation and training prior to serving followed by appropriate in-service training, a volunteer position description, supervision as required, continual communication, regular review and feedback, and recognition in various forms to show appreciation for their volunteer service.

The RSVP staff will work with station coordinators to ensure that volunteer assignments are appropriate and that the service activity will result in the outputs and outcomes in the Primary Focus Area - Healthy Futures. We will work together to determine the types of data needed to measure progress in achieving its accomplishments and impact goals. The RSVP staff will make sure that the resources required for the performance of the assignment are provided through follow-up with the volunteers and through site visits either by CVRSVP Staff or Advisory Council Members. The MoU may be amended at any time by mutual agreement. CVRSVP requires volunteer stations to notify them as soon as any circumstances arise which could affect or require changing the provisions of the MoU. RSVP staff will also share with the station coordinators the value that RSVP volunteers provide to their respective agencies: adding a compassionate, human touch to service in their organization; expanding the organization's reach into new communities; serving as highly credible messengers for the organization and increasing their capacity to serve and address community needs in addition to recruiting other community volunteers; and helping achieve outputs and outcomes related to the identified community need within the organization which they are serving to support the Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area.

As already mentioned RSVP volunteers are serving many Veterans as clients in the home delivered

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meals and transportation programs. In addition to service to veterans, the Concho Valley RSVP has a long history of collaborating with and providing volunteers to Goodfellow AFB programs. Goodfellow AFB is the largest employer in the Concho Valley and a diverse group of CVRSVP volunteers, including a large number of retired military personnel, currently provide service to GAFB pharmacy and the commissary for active military, veterans and families. This collaboration is supported by the fact that CVRSVP has received two awards in ceremonies at GAFB for the partnerships they have had: The Spirit of America Coalition Partner -- Empowering America through Compassionate Volunteer Collaboration and the 17th Training Wing Community Volunteer Organization of the Year. In 2007 the Air Force Volunteer Excellence Award, which recognizes military and federal retirees who perform outstanding volunteer service of a sustained, direct, and consequential nature was presented to three CVRSVP volunteers. CVRSVP volunteers also serve in the local VA clinic and provide transportation by driving the VA Van to the closest VA hospital in Big Spring, Texas which is a 180 mile round trip. Dr. Ken Stewart & Dr. Casey Jones, directors of Community Initiatives at Angelo State University Center for Community Wellness, Engagement and Development, with a program master goal to increase community engagement, validated that CVRSVP's focus on strengthening communities are identified and working. On August 2, 2012, they wrote in a San Angelo Standard Times newspaper article titled "Looking for Answers," that RSVP is one local group that, "...thrives on resident engagement, recognizing that solutions to complex problems require an array of organizations representing businesses, churches, government, nonprofit agencies and schools willing to reach out to those willing to share challenges and resources....they multiply capacities for action on community needs and interests."

### **Recruitment and Development**

The high quality volunteer experience will begin with the volunteer station to ensure that a current Memorandum of Understanding is in place and that the agency personnel who will be working with

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the RSVP volunteers know their responsibilities and the importance of supporting the RSVP volunteer in service. Volunteer management and infrastructure begins in the RSVP office making sure that RSVP staff have the knowledge, training and tools to properly manage volunteers. The current RSVP director has been with the Concho Valley RSVP for 26+ years, 24+ years of that time as director. She has provided training for her Program Assistant, as well as attending volunteer management training, RSVP area and state training and CNCS Virtual training. The experience for every RSVP volunteer begins with RSVP staff and/or Station Coordinators (RSVP's liaison with the agency) orienting them on the RSVP program and then completing the RSVP intake/application form which request them to list their skills, times available, and previous experience. Once this has been completed the RSVP staff discuss what volunteer positions are available that match the volunteers skills, times and education and then give them position descriptions for these opportunities. If a RSVP volunteer is new to San Angelo and feels more comfortable having an RSVP staff member accompany them to a volunteer station for their first assignment then arrangements are made to either meet them or take them to the station, at which time they are introduced to staff, receive orientation at the facility and are provided with station training requirements and any paperwork or policies required for their volunteer service there. In rural counties RSVP staff work with station representatives to recruit and manage RSVP volunteers. This is followed by continual monitoring and communication, regular review and feedback and recognition of their service. Continual communication may take the form of direct contact, telephone calls, emails, RSVP newsletter or through the RSVP web site. Monitoring includes follow-up with the volunteer to ensure their assignment meets their needs, abilities and skills and to make sure their service is rewarding. According to results from a survey that went out to all RSVP volunteers, and the personal positive feedback received by staff, the RSVP bi-monthly newsletter is the benefit they value the most. The newsletter is yet another way RSVP staff support the volunteers with recognition, new opportunities, activities of interest, station news and much more. RSVP volunteers

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are encouraged to share their volunteer experiences with other volunteers at recognition events, trainings, and by writing articles about their service for the CVRSVP newsletter.

The Concho Valley RSVP has developed a Leadership Program for the RSVP volunteers and Station Personnel (many of the practices used for this program are being replicated in Texas by another RSVP project). The CVRSVP used RSVP Advisory Council Members, Volunteer Station Personnel, and the local community college to provide some of the training, along with professional trainers who we engaged in the process. CVRSVP also received a \$25,000 Renewing Our Communities Capacity Building grant through which workshops on many subjects were held during 2010, open to RSVP volunteers and station staff to build leadership and volunteer management skills. Subjects included Volunteer Management, Social Media, Social Enterprise, Board Development, Collaborations and much more. This training also included how to design and write professional-quality volunteer position descriptions that are more satisfying to volunteers and also encourages responses from professionals and baby boomers. CVRSVP staff will continue to search out and apply for funds to support both RSVP volunteers and Volunteer Station Personnel in this way. It is not only important to train volunteers, it is important to make sure there are positions available to provide a high quality volunteer experience for every RSVP volunteer. Volunteer opportunities will offer flexibility and choice, both in the type of assignment and days and times of service to ensure that it meets the experiences, abilities and skills of the volunteer. When senior volunteers make service a part of their lives, they feel increased self-worth, accomplishment and value, which is supported through surveys completed by CVRSVP.

The RSVP staff contacts station coordinators bi-monthly for new volunteer opportunities. These new opportunities are then transmitted to volunteers via the RSVP newsletter, email, website and Volunteer Match. This offers existing volunteers the chance to use their skills in new areas, meet more volunteers with whom to share experiences and satisfy unmet needs they might have. RSVP

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staff and/or RSVP advisory council promptly and effectively respond to any RSVP volunteer emergencies and complaints.

In addition to the training mentioned above station personnel provide relevant training as required by the volunteer position at the agency where they are placed. As mentioned previously the MoU, which must be negotiated and signed prior to volunteer placement, serves as a guide to ensure a successful working relationship between RSVP and the stations. This MoU directs the specific responsibilities and requirements for both the station and RSVP and also mutual responsibilities shared by both. One of the station requirements is to implement orientation, in-service instruction or special training of RSVP volunteers as required by the agency. If the assignment is through a program managed by RSVP, staff training is provided by the RSVP staff, or for some assignments, by trained RSVP volunteers, such as for Kids Eat FREE, an assignment discussed in Healthy Futures. Trainings vary according to the volunteer position, however each are designed to equip RSVP volunteers with the skills to be successful in their volunteer position.

Strategies to engage a diverse group will begin by taking an informed, planned and strategic approach. Some of these strategies will come from the RSVP advisory council, a diverse group of decision makers who help shape opinion and direction within the Concho Valley RSVP program. 6 of the 27 member council are military veterans, including a retired commander from the local military base, and they serve as a valuable resource in the area of recruiting retired military RSVP volunteers and to provide services to veterans, active military and their families. We also have a racially and ethnically diverse council, representing businesses, media, government, education, churches, nonprofit agencies/RSVP stations, senior retirement and assisted living facilities, urban/rural representatives, and existing RSVP Volunteers, to help with recruiting diverse volunteers. We continue to look for input, support and recruitment from the organizations and individuals who are already partners and are influential within the targeted diverse groups. The Concho Valley RSVP has a strong volunteer management

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system and procedures in place, allowing and working with anyone who expresses interest in volunteering to be placed into an assignment. We build upon the diversity that already exists related to a variety of ages (55 to 94), education and economic levels, races, ethnicities and degrees of English proficiency to ensure an accurate reflection on the local communities. We use different avenues for diversity recruitment including all forms of media (print media, TV and radio) with whom we have already built strong working relationships. There is on-going face-to-face type recruitment including onsite presentations, display booths and events sponsored by other organizations. Existing RSVP volunteers serve as our best recruitment tool and we continue to look to them to help recruit from a diverse population. We also look to recruit a diverse population from military organization retirees such as the VFW, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Goodfellow AFB Retirees Activities Office and others. Through the Kids Eat FREE Summer Program and Faith in Action the Concho Valley RSVP program has great connections with communities of faith and so we can use these existing partnerships to recruit from diverse communities of faith. We have also been successful in diverse recruiting efforts using Volunteer Match (online volunteer recruitment website with local opportunities and information), the CVRSVP website, the RSVP newsletter, articles in church bulletins and retirement center newsletters, networking with community groups and letters to editor.

There is an on-going strategic development of quality print materials about volunteer opportunities available through CVRSVP to support recruitment efforts. The marketing used includes the information about the value of the RSVP program to recruit new volunteers, while keeping current volunteers through the delivery of quality experiences. The marketing plan is a simple one page document that specifically describes who we are, what we do, and who can benefit from our services (volunteers, agencies and the community at large). With the change in the RSVP program model focusing on the six Priority areas we will change our marketing materials to support recruitment in

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these areas.

Each year the CVRSVP staff, advisory council and the sponsoring agency host an Annual Awards and Recognition Lunch to honor all RSVP volunteers who have served during the past year. Each year the event has a theme, which encourages additional participation from the volunteers. All RSVP volunteers receive a Certificate of Appreciation for their service. President's Volunteer Service Awards are given to volunteers who have achieved a certain standard in their volunteer service with the Lifetime Award being 4000+ hours of service. Since 2005 CVRSVP has awarded 424 bronze, 397 silver, 602 gold and 98 lifetime President's Awards to qualifying RSVP volunteers. Outstanding volunteers are recognized with a Plaque. Local dignitaries and elected officials willingly participate in recognizing the impact that RSVP volunteers have in the Concho Valley and the importance of the program to the communities. The mayor presents a proclamation both at a City Council Meeting prior to the event and again during the ceremony honoring the service of RSVP volunteers. The RSVP staff write, edit, print and assemble a 24 page program which lists ALL RSVP volunteers by name, lists those receiving Presidents' Service Awards and much more. This event is covered by the media and is supported through in-kind donations from many sources, including the Royal Neighbors of America & Habitat Service Chapter, who provide a gift for each volunteer.

RSVP volunteer achievements are also included and recognized in the RSVP newsletters and on the website, and they receive expressions of thanks extended verbally and in writing. The RSVP staff, assisted by members of the RSVP Advisory Council, nominates RSVP volunteers for other awards, for which many of the RSVP Volunteers are past winners. This includes, but is not limited to the Jefferson Award, Texas Governor's Volunteer Awards, CNCS Spirit of Service Awards, and Concho Valley Senior Hall of Fame. In addition many of the agencies where RSVP Volunteers serve host their own awards, where both RSVP volunteers and the RSVP staff are included. One agency actually hosts an "RSVP Awards and Recognition" where they honor only RSVP volunteer serving through

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their agency. They provide everything including facility, awards, entertainment, and food. Developing and cultivating the leadership capacity of RSVP volunteers is one of the best ways to ensure a high quality volunteer experience, volunteer-driven program expansion, and sustainable services to the community. For some volunteers, the best reward is public recognition; for others, it is more responsibility or the opportunity for training; and for others, the satisfaction of seeing their work pay off in their community. All of this will be taken into consideration when recognizing the volunteers.

Last, but certainly not least is evaluation. Evaluation is essential to maintaining a high quality volunteer program and to retain existing volunteers. Evaluation can provide CVRSVP with ways of measuring how the program is progressing, both on an individual level (the volunteer) and on the programmatic level. Evaluation helps determine what is and is not working in the program, improves the overall program by providing evidence of effectiveness and identification of weaknesses as well as strengths, and evaluation data can be used to strengthen the quality of the CVRSVP program and improve outcomes.

Evaluations have covered many topics/areas over the past years and included the RSVP volunteers, workstations, and the advisory council. Other evaluations included project management, resource development/diversity of funding, training programs, and impact of services.

### **Program Management**

All CVRSVP volunteer stations must fit the requirement as defined in the RSVP Program Regulations: a public agency, secular or faith-based private non-profit agency or proprietary health care organization that accepts responsibility for assignment and supervision of RSVP volunteers. The RSVP director has recently rewritten the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which is negotiated with staff at stations which meet program requirements to ensure that prohibited volunteer activities (proselytizing, displacing paid workers and political engagement) are addressed along with,

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handicapped accessibility and volunteer safety. In addition RSVP staff maintain contact with station personnel through email, telephone calls and on-site visits to support what is outlined in the MoU and to observe RSVP volunteers in-action during their assignments. Not only are the station personnel aware of program requirements, but RSVP volunteers are as well. This occurs during orientation and training and all RSVP volunteers receive a program handbook that outlines very specific responsibilities. The handbook includes the local and national history and mission of the RSVP program, qualifications required to serve as a RSVP Volunteer, types of service opportunities, benefits, prohibited activities, grievance policy, listing of all agencies that have a signed MoU with RSVP and a copy of the Volunteer Insurance Service. Confidentiality is discussed with the volunteer and included as a condition of placement on the RSVP volunteer application.

The plan and infrastructure to address needs outside the Primary Focus Area will mirror those for the Primary Focus areas already discussed in Strengthening Communities. The goal is to develop volunteer workstations and assignments for the other Focus Areas and Community Need Area. Just as in the Primary Focus Area, the community need will be documented. RSVP volunteers will receive a background check by the agencies if required. They will also receive orientation and training prior to serving, a volunteer position description, supervision as required, continual communication, regular review and feedback, and recognition in various forms to show appreciation for their volunteer service. RSVP Staff will engage in dialogue with station personnel to discuss the priorities outlined in the MoU, making sure that RSVP volunteers are supported in their position and that the station staff will maintain documentation as needed to support outputs or help conduct surveys to document outcomes.

Five priority focus areas outside the primary focus area to be served by RSVP volunteers are: O1- Number of economically disadvantaged individuals receiving financial literacy services with the activity being RSVP volunteer assisting with the AARP income tax assistance program; D6-Number of

RSVP volunteer service hours in disaster mitigation, response and recovery with RSVP volunteers assisting with preparation, response and recovery in a disaster through stations such as the Red Cross, The Salvation Army and Citizens Corps. V8-Number of veteran's family members that received CNCS supported assistance with service to both the parent/guardian and child of military members through the evidenced based program "Tell Me a Story" developed by the Military Child Education Coalition; G3-3.16-Dollar value of cash resources leveraged by CNCS supported organizations or national service participants by garnering donations through a myriad of services to seven non-profit organizations; and O2- Number of economically disadvantaged individuals receiving job training and other skill development services through Christian Womens Job Corps and Adult Literacy Council.

Over the past two years CVRSVP began the process of focusing recruitment in areas where we have current work plans with Performance Measurements...so we have already been working to minimize disruption to volunteers. We also have been using attrition to maximize placement in Performance Areas. If any current agencies with a MoU have no RSVP volunteers presently serving, we will only renegotiate a new MoU for the 2013-2016 grant period if they have volunteer opportunities in the Focus Areas or Capacity Building. To prevent disruption, or to keep it to a minimum for the remaining RSVP Volunteers serving in Community Priorities, we will provide them opportunities to serve in Priority Focus Areas at other agencies or allow them to serve in the Community Need area if they are meeting a documented community need with outcomes. If after all the above has been considered and there still is the need to reduce the ratio of RSVP volunteers serving in the Community Needs area there will be a written method/policy for "graduating" volunteers. CVRSVP will consider the impact being made by the volunteers in terms of scope of service, in terms of type of service and in the number of hours served. RSVP volunteers who are currently on the RSVP roles but not serving on a regular basis or intensively in short-term assignments, such as at special events or projects, will be contacted about other placements. As volunteers are "graduated," and as appropriate, RSVP

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volunteers will be referred to other agencies.

Additionally graduation of volunteers and stations will be a major agenda item with members of the RSVP advisory council over the next six months. Their feedback will determine how the RSVP program moves forward as the changes are made and implemented to focus on key outcomes as required by the Serve America Act and CNCS. We will make every effort to move existing volunteers into a Focus Area, recruit new volunteers to serve in Focus Areas and thus try and keep the remainder of the RSVP volunteers in the Community Needs Category. While every effort will be made to keep disruption to a minimum a major change such as this may cause some negative response. In addition to minimizing the disruptions to stations and volunteers, it will be very important to present the new RSVP model to the community in a proactive, positive manner. Additionally, it may be difficult to explain to funders, elected officials and other community leaders why we are "graduating" volunteers, when there is such a community need for all volunteers willing to serve. Not a popular task, but a necessary one.

The RSVP staff includes data measurement as a requirement of the volunteer station in the negotiated MoU - "Supply statistical data as requested to assess volunteer impact on community needs." RSVP staff have been working with the Volunteer Stations since inception of Performance Measurement in the 1990's to begin tracking and reporting data needed to support project work plan outputs and outcomes. As this grant application is being prepared, the RSVP director is contacting agencies that have RSVP volunteers serving in Priority Areas, other Focus Areas and Capacity Building to determine targets, as well as how documentation to support outcome and outputs can be managed. The RSVP record management systems, already in place, will have to be revised to track data as required for the new work plans (RSVP Reporter and excel spread sheets - program developers for Volunteer Reporter will have to come up with new software upgrades with the capability of tracking unduplicated volunteers across multiple Focus Areas and outputs/outcomes). Staff will meet with station

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coordinators, many of whom are already working with on Performance Measures, to determine tools to use to track outputs and in some cases outcomes for the New National Performance Measures and Capacity Building outputs. If the CVRSVP is competitively successful it is the intention of the RSVP director to develop a concise document to send out to all agencies which will provide an overview of the new RSVP model and Priority Areas and then schedule one-on-one meetings to explain how their agency fits in the new system or to discuss how we can change/develop new volunteer positions which align with the measures. There will also be a letter with information sent to all RSVP volunteers and numerous information sessions held at the RSVP office inviting volunteer participation to explain the direction of the RSVP program with information available about all the opportunities available in the Priority Focus Areas.

The sponsor, West Texas Rehab Center (WTRC), was founded in 1953 and has been sponsoring RSVP programs since 1973 under the agency called ACTION, continuing into the 1990's when Senior Corps Programs were placed under the Corporation for National and Community Service. The present Concho Valley RSVP director, Dolores Schwertner, has been with the program since 1986, serving as director since 1988. She has received extensive training in nonprofit management, volunteer management, leadership, financial and programmatic management, performance tracking and outcome based evaluations and grant writing. She completed the National Service Leadership Institute in 2003 and the Strategic Management Program for Nonprofit Leaders held by the RGK Center for Philanthropy and Community Service at the University of Texas at Austin in 2009. She has written, received and managed Federal, State and Local grants at all times during the past 24 years, including writing and receiving 6 Programs of National Significance (PNS) grants through the Corporation for National Service and meeting all outcomes associated with these awards. One of the most recent PNS awards, to engage RSVP volunteers in Kids Eat FREE a summer feeding program for food-insecure children, was also chosen to receive a \$10,000 replication award by the Aging

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Network's Volunteer Collaborative. Also in May 2012 she wrote an augmentation grant to support military families and was selected as one of 17 RSVP programs from across the U.S to receive the augmentation funding. Working in tandem with WTRC the RSVP director keeps reports on all income and expenditures both cash and in-kind. In-kind donations are all documented and signed by both the donor and the RSVP director with this statement above the donor signature, "I certify that this in-kind contribution is not from another federal source." Separate accounts are maintained on all streams of funding and never co-mingled. The RSVP director codes monthly expenses to the correct category and account and then the WTRC accounting department issues all payments and also tracks all income and expenditures through their financial systems, which is audited annually. Cuff reports are then sent back to the RSVP director who verifies them against the records she has maintained. The RSVP director maintains an expense compared to budget spread sheet to track expenditures through the grant year and to manage resources month to month. Through financial policies, checks and balances and monthly reconciling of all accounts WTRC and CVRSVP manage financial and in-kind dollars efficiently and effectively.

### **Organizational Capability**

As employees of the sponsoring agency, RSVP staff must follow all West Texas Rehab policies which are reviewed, revised and updated. Policies include but are not limited to: Accounting and Financial Management (accounts payable, purchasing/pcard, travel, donations, cell phones, and more); Administrative; HR; Departmental; and Emergency and Office Management. All policies are posted on the West Texas Rehab intranet and are easily accessible at all times. The RSVP director has the use of a purchasing card for supplies, travel, printing, recognition items and other programmatic needs. Long distance travel requires prior approval from the COO. Each month all purchases must be coded to the proper account and category with a description of purchases, have an attached receipt and be submitted to and approved by the Chief Operating Officer before going to accounting. The RSVP

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director codes all expenses to the correct accounts and categories. Expenses coded include purchasing card expenses, payroll expenses and other bills not payable with a credit purchasing card. The Sponsors Accounting Department staff then pays all bills, reconciles all statements and then submits a cuff report to the RSVP director to reconcile accounting data to the data she maintains. Any discrepancies are discussed and reconciled. This allows for thorough management of all funding and informs the RSVP director on expenditures to budget each month. Through the use of the software program, Volunteer Reporter, RSVP staff track volunteer information, hours of service, service areas, performance data, volunteer station data, media, advisory council, mailing databases and more. In 24 years of grant management by the RSVP director and the sponsor, there has never been a programmatic or fiscal finding related to CVRSVP.

The West Texas Rehab has not only been the sponsor of the Concho Valley RSVP (San Angelo) since 1981, but has been the sponsor of the Big Country RSVP (Abilene) since 1973. In Sept. 2011 the RSVP director in Abilene resigned. The Abilene program was already operating on a small stretched budget which had been magnified by the 20% across the board cut to all RSVP programs earlier that year. The Chief Operating Officer for WTRC, Steve Martin, serves both locations and when the Abilene RSVP director resigned he asked the Concho Valley RSVP director of 24 years (Dolores Schwertner) if she would serve as RSVP director for both the Concho Valley and Big Country RSVP. Knowing that the federal regulations for RSVP requires a project director to serve full-time, except as negotiated otherwise with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) the CNCS State Program Specialist was contacted about the possibility of Dolores Schwertner serving as project director for the two RSVP programs with the West Texas Rehab as sponsor. The situation of these two programs is very unique in that both RSVP programs share the same sponsor, same COO, same accounting and IT department, as well as being connected by networked phone and computer systems. Approval was received from CNCS, and Dolores Schwertner now serves as the project

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director for both the Big Country and Concho Valley RSVP. Serving as the RSVP director of two projects has not adversely affected the size, scope or quality of project operations for either program. Based on Federal funds available and discussion with CNCS she serves San Angelo at 65% time and Abilene 35%. This division of time and duties has worked exceptionally well as both programs are supported identically by the same HR and IT staff, accounting staff, COO, and CFO. Also all computers and phone systems are networked so staff and files for both programs are easily accessible at all times. Having networked communication systems also allows for on-going communication and support between the RSVP director and the Program Assistant for both locations and allows for peer-to-peer support between the two Program Assistants. The Concho Valley RSVP program has a Program Assistant (Jennifer Puryear-Gomez) who is well trained and knowledgeable on program operations, has previously managed grants and has the work ethic and ability to manage day-to-day operations when the director is not physically in the office. The Concho Valley RSVP director and program assistant positions will be sustained through grant funds as budgeted in this grant application. Roles and job requirements are identified in written position descriptions and staff are evaluated against these job requirements annually. The RSVP director also knows the community well and forges critical alliances to meet community needs, retains staffing at levels sufficient for the organizations to meet its goals and performance objectives, and encourages decision making and internal collaboration among staff. Through Timeclock Manager all staff are required to log in daily and their time is approved by their respective supervisors every two weeks before going to payroll. The Timeclock Manager also allows the RSVP director to allocate her work time to either Concho Valley or Big Country RSVP at any time during a given day.

In June 2011 the Concho Valley took the TCC Group's (a national firm that provides strategy, evaluation, and capacity-building services to funders and nonprofits) Core Capacity Assessment Tool and the results documented strong volunteer management and service delivery. The scale used to

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determine a strong area was a score 230+ and CVRSVP scored above that as follows: Managing Performance Expectations 263, Volunteer Management 257, Financial Management 281 and Service Delivery 240. In addition the CVRSVP director has received CNCS Programs of National Significance Grants for two programs in the Primary Focus Area -- Kids Eat FREE and Faith in Action and surpassed the goals projected in the initial application which indicates a strong track record in the Primary Focus area. In May 2012 CVRSVP was notified that the effective practice they submitted for Kids Eat-FREE had been chosen for replication by The Aging Network's Volunteer Collaborative and received a \$10,000 award to do so. Many of the workplans with outputs and outcomes in the current RSVP grant are in the primary focus area or other focus areas and have been revised over time to better demonstrate community impact. This includes not only those mentioned above but also Meals for the Elderly (another Primary Focus Area workplan) which is the current work plan CVRSVP is required to meet Performance Measure targets for. As we move into the new National Performance Measures CVRSVP is positioned well with the current workplans and moving the existing Performance Measures into Priority or other Focus Areas. In addition to managing senior volunteers for 24+ years through CVRSVP, the RSVP director has served as the Chairman of the local Area Agency on Aging Regional Advisory Council, the City of San Angelo Senior Services Board and represented both seniors and National Service as Vice Chair of both the Texas Commission for National and Community Service and then the Texas OneStar National Service Board.

The CVRSVP program purchased 3 new computers/monitors and a printer in 2011 with money from the Capacity Grant (previously mentioned) and therefore computers are fairly new. Technology is up-to-date with IT support from WTRC; CVRSVP has two offices and a work area along with two storage areas, as well as use of the community area which seats 200+ and kitchen in the City of San Angelo Senior Activity Center which is in-kind support from the City, and is an optimal location for RSVP volunteer recruitment; supplies are either in-kind or budgeted in this grant; and new desk, filing

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cabinets, and work tables were purchased with funds donated in 2002 by the Tom Green County Senior Citizens Foundation.

The Chief Operating Officer supervises CVRSVP program and the RSVP director. The RSVP director meets regularly with the supervisor to discuss the budget, programmatic successes and challenges, and program management. This communication time has been enhanced as the RSVP Director and the COO carpool together to Abilene twice a week now that she is also managing the Abilene RSVP program. Policies and personnel management is addressed in previous paragraphs.

The CVRSVP 27 member RSVP Advisory Council program input has already been substantiated in reference to diversity recruiting, recognition and veterans. The RSVP director provides a written report to council members at each bi-monthly meeting held at Royal Estates Assisted Living Facility where staff there provide in-kind meeting space and a meal to the council...their way of lending support to a program they see meeting so many community needs. Each meeting has an agenda to guide the direction and meeting discussions. The Advisory Council is kept up-to-date and provide guidance and input on: funding strategies/fundraising, accomplishments and impacts being made by RSVP volunteers, administrative and program needs, assessment of community needs, recognition, and publicity.

The required federal share is matched by in-kind office space from the City of San Angelo, IT/Accounting/telephone and other in-kind support from the sponsor, in-kind donations for recognition, other grants as appropriate, fund raising through Bilbrey Tours, and State funds allocated by the Texas Legislature through the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services. The RSVP director currently has a proposal out to a number of interested entities to underwrite the cost of the RSVP newsletter - both printing and postage.

### Other

N/A