

Narratives

Executive Summary

The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures. An estimated 270 RSVP volunteers will serve through a network of 17 meals sites in the eight counties of Northeast Tennessee (Carter, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, Washington Counties). RSVP volunteers will deliver hot, nutritious meals daily to 938 homebound elderly and disabled individuals to assist them in staying in their own homes.

An estimated 100 RSVP volunteers will serve in 15 community ministry sites such as Second Harvest Food Bank, Salvation Army, soup kitchens, commodity food distributions, and other community ministry outreach organizations helping to distribute food and other necessities to assist the low-income population to meet their food and household needs.

At the end of the 3 year performance period, 900 homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities will be able to remain in their own homes and not be institutionalized and will report having increased social ties or perceived social support. 5,000 individuals will have increased food security of themselves and their children (household food security) as a result of CNCS supported services.

At the end of the three year grant period, we will have enrolled 40 RSVP volunteers to assist the local Veterans Administration and veterans organizations.

The CNCS federal investment of \$52,312 will be supplemented by \$16,420 local support and \$13,682 in-kind office space.

Strengthening Communities

Narratives

Describe the community you serve. (limit your description to one Primary Focus Area)

Located in the foothills of the southern Appalachian Mountains, the Upper East Tennessee Human Development Agency, Inc. (UETHDA) serves the eight counties of Carter, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi and Washington in Northeast Tennessee (the area covered by the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Northeast Tennessee).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Tennessee has the 12th highest poverty rate in the nation. The most recent U.S. Census data reveal that there are 101,253 people living in poverty in the eight-county region of Northeast Tennessee (1 out of every 5 residents). Three out of eight counties are among the top 10 poorest counties in the state (one is the third-poorest county in the state with a poverty rate that is double the nation's poverty rate), while a fourth county is among the top 20. Poverty, along with unemployment and current economic conditions, is one of the biggest factors impacting hunger among this region's population. Additionally, according to Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap 2012 study, 15% of Northeast Tennesseans are considered food insecure; 1 in 4 children are considered food insecure.

Individuals living at or below poverty guideline levels need assistance from local agencies to help them make it through each month to meet their need for not only food, but also clothing, household staples and other essentials. We anticipate continued increase in need, even as the economy begins to recover, as we expect the long-term effects of the recession will remain for several years. As economic times change, so does the utilization of food banks and their agencies by people in need, according to a new Feeding America study, Food Banks: Hunger's New Staple. Food from pantries is not just being used to meet temporary acute food needs; instead, for many who seek food assistance, pantries are now a part of households' long-term strategies to supplement monthly shortfalls in food -- a place

Narratives

these families and individuals go on a regular, ongoing basis to help them make it through each month.

Describe the ways in which RSVP volunteers and their stations are managed as a highly effective means to address the identified community need(s) in the Primary Focus Area.

RSVP volunteers will be managed as a highly effective means to address identified community needs in the following manner. Through the local community ministry programs such as Second Harvest Food Bank, UETHDA's Neighborhood Service Centers' commodities food distribution program, meal delivery to homebound individuals, community food banks, soup kitchens, and community ministry agencies and thrift stores, RSVP volunteers will work to alleviate hunger, food insecurity, and other household needs as much as possible.

Each of the local agencies partnering with RSVP are staffed and organized by caring individuals whose main goal is to help the less fortunate in our communities. RSVP volunteers are placed at these ministry sites because of their identified deep passion for wanting to do something to help alleviate the hunger and to make sure, as much as possible, that the families' household needs are met.

Donations are solicited by the community agencies' staff and the RSVP volunteers organize and help distribute the items that are collected. RSVP volunteers are extremely valuable assets to the community organizations.

Describe the service activities in the Primary Focus Area that lead to National Performance Measure outputs or outcomes

Narratives

Last year RSVP volunteers delivered hot meals to 938 homebound individuals in the eight- county service area. The First Tennessee Human Resource Agency prepares the hot meals each morning and delivers them to 15 sites where RSVP volunteers then pick them up and deliver to the homes of the homebound individuals each day, Monday through Friday. Some of the homebound individuals also receive frozen meals on Friday for the weekend ahead. This much needed service not only assists these individuals to remain in their own homes and not be institutionalized, but also assures them a visitor each day to help them remain connected and give them a social tie to the community.

RSVP volunteers also work at the Second Harvest Food Bank which serves all eight counties in Northeast Tennessee separating food items and stocking the shelves for easy distribution. RSVP volunteers also help with delivering the food items to local food pantries and distribution sites and work with the Mobile Food Pantry to deliver food directly to people in need of emergency food assistance. Food assistance is currently provided for more than 38,000 people per month through Second Harvest Food Bank's agencies, program and services.

Connect the following three elements in the Primary Focus Area so that the service activities address the need, and result in the anticipated outputs and/or out comes: The community needs identified, the service activities that will be carried out by RSVP volunteers, and the anticipated output(s) or outcomes(s)

The community needs that have been identified for this program include individuals' need for food and household staples to maintain a healthy lifestyle and make ends meet each month. Also there is the need for homebound individuals to be able to have a hot meal each day to enable them to live

Narratives

independently in their own homes and have a social tie to the community. RSVP volunteers will serve at local food banks, community ministry organizations and food delivery of hot meals to homebound individuals to help the agencies meet the needs of the communities in the eight-county area with an anticipated outcome of 3,000 people served in commodity distributions, 38,000 people served by the Second Harvest Food Bank and community ministry organizations, and 938 homebound individuals delivered a hot meal each day.

Include current or planned significant activities in service to veterans and military families.

RSVP currently has a Memo-of-Understanding with the local Veterans Administration in Mountain Home, Tennessee and has placed several volunteers there with an anticipation of placing many more in the future.

The RSVP Project Director has been appointed as the Senior Corps Veterans Administration Voluntary Services (VAVS) local representative for the VA Medical Center in Mountain Home, Tennessee. With this assignment, the potential exists for new service areas to be identified and volunteers enrolled to address those needs. RSVP will place volunteers at VA centers as a solution to help enhance the lives of Veterans and the work of the VA Medical Center. When meeting with the VAVS committee, the project director will solicit volunteers from the veteran community to help with the food distribution programs in their communities and other volunteer opportunities within their realm of interest.

Recruitment and Development

Describe your plan and infrastructure to create high quality volunteer assignments with opportunities such as building skills, developing leadership potential, reflecting on the meaning of service, and enhancing the quality of the volunteers' own lives.

Narratives

RSVP is a well established program in the eight counties of Northeast Tennessee. RSVP has been in existence here since 1971 -- since the inception of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program nationally.

RSVP work site supervisors train the RSVP volunteers in the specific operations of their duties in serving the community and then allow the volunteers to work at their own pace and help make decisions in carrying out their volunteer assignment.

RSVP signs a Memo Of Understanding (MOU) with work sites that provide meaningful opportunities for senior volunteers to utilize their talents and skills and also broaden their experiences to include new areas of expertise. RSVP assignments enable the senior volunteers to remain physically and mentally active and enhance their self-esteem through participation in needed community service. RSVP volunteers see the results of their service to the community organizations and the low-income population and are recognized by their work sites and by the RSVP staff for their great contributions.

Describe your plan and infrastructure to ensure RSVP volunteers receive the training needed to be effective in their assignments.

RSVP provides a Policy and Procedures manual that outlines the rules and regulations of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program and details the guidelines governing volunteer placements and activities that volunteers are not allowed to participate in such as electoral activities, displacement of employed workers, compensation from beneficiaries, or religious instruction.

Each work site staff is responsible for training the volunteers to do the tasks needed to support the

Narratives

work of the organization. When asked, RSVP staff will help with the training by serving alongside the volunteers to be sure they understand what is expected of them in their assignment.

Describe your plan and infrastructure to recruit a volunteer pool reflective of the demographics of the geographic communities served. As applicable, include plans to recruit and place individuals of all races, ethnicities, and degrees of English language proficiency.

According to estimates from the 2010 census, the population of this eight-county region in Northeast Tennessee is approximately 97% white, 2% Black or African American, less than 1% American Indian and Alaskan Native and less than 1% Asian. The current statistics of the volunteers enrolled in RSVP of Northeast Tennessee are 96% are white, 2% are Black or African American, less than 1% are Hispanic, less than 1% are Asian, and 2% are American Indian. Additionally, 72% of the volunteers are female and 28% are male.

Volunteers are recruited through advertising that RSVP is open to all seniors 55 and over without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability. All seniors have talents, abilities, and wisdom to share and to work together for a common goal of helping community organizations and/or individuals in their communities. RSVP staff also attends various community meetings and recruits through guest speaking engagements at places such as civic clubs, interagency meetings, and other organizations to ensure volunteer opportunities are made available to seniors in all eight counties that the program serves. Current RSVP volunteers are good advocates for the program by inviting their friends and relatives to join RSVP and get involved in their communities. In an area where less than 4% of the total population is minority, the current RSVP volunteer enrollment includes approximately 1% minority in the age group of 55 and over.

Narratives

Describe your plan and infrastructure to recruit veterans and military family members as RSVP volunteers.

The RSVP Director, Ruth Phillips, has been appointed to the VAVS committee at the Veterans Administration Medical Center at Mountain Home, Tennessee. Through this partnership, not only will we be able to place more volunteers at the VA, the opportunity to recruit veterans and their families as RSVP volunteers will be an asset of this placement.

Describe your plan and infrastructure to recruit RSVP volunteers with disabilities, including individuals with age-related disabilities.

Recruitment of volunteers with disabilities, including individuals with age-related disabilities, will be accomplished through speaking engagements at local organizations where seniors of all abilities will be invited to join RSVP. Volunteer stations will be enlisted with volunteer opportunities that will accommodate all seniors of all abilities.

Describe your plan and infrastructure to retain and recognize the RSVP volunteers.

Retention practices are critical in maintaining a corps of active volunteers. Both the volunteer and the work station will complete an annual survey conducted by the UETHDA Board of Directors to assure satisfaction among the volunteers and the work site supervisors and to assess any areas where improvements could be made to enhance the value of the program in the community.

Narratives

On-going recognition is important in creating an environment where volunteers feel valued. RSVP staff will provide volunteers and work sites with regular feedback about their value to the program. Each fall a formal recognition luncheon is provided for volunteers and volunteer work site supervisors to recognize their accomplishments in the community. Program staff will make regular visits to the work sites to ensure work site supervisors of the importance of their participation in the program.

Program Management

Describe your plan and infrastructure to ensure management of volunteer stations in compliance with RSVP program regulations and applicable laws.

A potential station's compliance to RSVP regulations will be judged by the program manager and determined whether the station fits in with the applicable laws and regulations. If the station is in compliance, a Memo-of-Understanding (MOU) will be executed and signed by the station supervisor indicating that all regulations are met.

The RSVP staff provides a Policy and Procedures manual to each work site that outlines the rules and regulations of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program and details the guidelines governing volunteer placements and activities that volunteers are not allowed to participate in such as electoral activities, displacement of employed workers, compensation from beneficiaries, or religious instruction.

Describe your plan and infrastructure to develop capacity to recruit and manage volunteer stations that address specified unmet community needs outside the Primary Focus Area.

When receiving a request for volunteers from a station that is not in the Primary Focus Area of

Narratives

Healthy Futures, the project director will first determine if the station meets all the regulations of RSVP compliance. Upon determining the station's compliance, a MOU will be executed and volunteer recruitment will then begin. Stations that already exist outside the Primary Focus Area in RSVP of Northeast Tennessee include congregate meal sites at senior centers, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, and a natural history museum to name a few.

Describe your plan and infrastructure to responsibly graduate volunteer stations to meet changing community needs and minimize disruptions to current volunteers where possible. The plan may include reassigning volunteers at the station to capacity building assignments.

Under the new strategic plan and the requirements for measurable outcomes, nursing home stations will be graduated as stations; however, volunteers will continue to visit the nursing homes and sing in group performances. The nursing home stations will not see a change in having volunteers visit their facilities. Likewise, hospitals will be graduated as stations and the volunteers will continue to serve. The volunteers are appreciative of the recognition they get as RSVP volunteers; however, that is not the reason they serve. The volunteers are merely interested in making a difference in their communities and in the stations where they serve.

Letters will be sent to volunteers and to volunteer stations that will be graduated thanking them for their support of RSVP and explaining to them the requirements from CNCS to be able to measure outcomes. Volunteers will be given the opportunity to serve at other volunteer stations or assignments if they wish to remain a volunteer with the RSVP program.

Describe your plan and infrastructure to assure National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs are measured and collected.

Narratives

In an agreement with work site staff, outcomes and outputs are collected and measured as volunteer service is performed. In cases of homebound meal delivery the outcomes and outputs will be received from the station supervisor at the end of the annual period. The outputs and outcomes from the community ministry sites are measured and collected at the end of each quarter. When signing the Memo-of-Understanding, the work site supervisor agrees to supply to the RSVP staff the outputs and outcomes gained from having RSVP volunteers helping at their station.

Describe your plan and infrastructure to manage project resources, both financial and in-kind, to ensure accountability and efficient and effective use of available resources.

UETHDA has maintained a centralized accounting system since 1979 and was one of the first multi-funded non-profit agencies to have a single audit in the State of Tennessee. For over 35 years UETHDA has successfully managed CNCS programs including RSVP and AmeriCorps VISTA. There has never been an audit finding in the RSVP program.

Any purchases made from the RSVP federal and local funds follow strict procedures to insure the purchases are legal and pertain directly to the RSVP program. Before making a purchase, a requisition form is prepared and approved. Upon completing the purchase, a check authorization is prepared with the original statements or receipts and the requisition attached for approval by the fiscal director to determine compliance with CNCS and UETHDA regulations before a check is written.

At the end of each month the Finance Director prepares a financial report for the RSVP Program Director detailing the federal expenses by line item and the federal amount remaining, the non-federal

Narratives

expenses by line item and the non-federal amount remaining and a total budget comparison.

At the end of each quarter, in-kind forms are prepared and signed by the appropriate City Government officials and recorded and filed by the UETHDA Accounting Department.

Organizational Capability

Describe your plan and infrastructure to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight, day-to-day operational support and data collection, to include clearly defined internal policies.

Since 1971 the Upper East Tennessee Human Development Agency (UETHDA) has been the sponsoring agency for RSVP of Northeast Tennessee. Beginning with the early programs, identification and delivery of services to the senior population and non-profit organizations have been a priority.

The Agency's long history of operating multiple programs has required sufficient capacity to assure adequate facilities, equipment, supplies, management support, policies and procedures and clearly defined roles of staff and administrators.

UETHDA has maintained a centralized accounting system since 1979 and was one of the first multi-funded non-profit agencies to have a single audit in the State of Tennessee. For over 35 years UETHDA has successfully managed CNCS programs including RSVP and AmeriCorps VISTA. Both of these programs assist in strengthening the community through volunteer service. Since CNCS implemented Impact-Based Programming, the RSVP program has successfully reported achievements.

Narratives

All programs of UETHDA are required to report National Performance Measures annually encompassing National Performance Indicators to the National Association for State Community Services Programs.

RSVP volunteer data is entered in a computerized system to track volunteer activity. The system provides reports by county, by station, and by volunteer activity. Reports are generated each month for station supervisors to collect volunteer time donated. RSVP staff enters the volunteer time in the computer system and also in log books for backup. Reports are generated quarterly detailing the work and outcomes accomplished by the volunteers for the Agency Board and for supporters of RSVP.

Descriptions of clearly defined staff positions, including how these positions will be sustained and (as applicable) identification of current staff assigned to the project.

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program staff consists of a project director located in the Central Office of UETHDA and a field coordinator located in Greene County. Ruth Phillips began in RSVP in September of 1991 as secretary. She has served as the program director since September of 1993 with the exception of one year (August, 1997 through June, 1998) when she worked in the Agency's Head Start Program. Ms. Phillips has developed new volunteer opportunities with new stations and recruited many new volunteers. Ms. Phillips has a great rapport with community leaders and volunteer station supervisors as well as the volunteers.

Betty Cook was hired in August 2007 as the coordinator in our Greene County field office. Previously Betty was Executive Director of the Greene County United Way for 40 years and was volunteer coordinator at Holston Home for Children for 5 years. She brings with her great experience and

Narratives

knowledge of non-profit organizations and their volunteer needs.

Other key staff includes the Executive Director and the Finance Director of the Agency. Lois Smith has served as Executive Director of UETHDA for 23 years. Before that she served as the Agency's Finance Director for 20 years. Employed as Finance Director since July 1, 2009, Connie Shockley has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Accounting with a minor in Economics and Management. Ms. Shockley was employed in December 1996 in the Accounting Department as Payroll and Benefits Specialist and became Assistant Finance Director in 2008 before becoming the Finance Director in 2009. In Ms. Smith's absence, the Executive Director's responsibilities are delegated to Ms. Shockley.

Describe your organizations track record in the Primary Focus Area, senior service, managing volunteers, and in measuring performance.

RSVP volunteers have been involved with the homebound meal delivery program and with the community ministry programs for the past 21 years that the current project director has served in that position. RSVP volunteers at the community ministry organizations are faithful and determined to provide a hand up to anyone who has a need.

Since the 1990's UETHDA has focused on developing, tracking and achieving outcomes surrounding the community, the Agency and its customers. Through these outcome accomplishments and annual community needs assessments, project accomplishments are assessed.

UETHDA operates the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) program which has nine Neighborhood Service Centers (NSC's) in the eight-county region of Northeast Tennessee. These

Narratives

centers are the link to the low-income population for services provided by CSBG; such as, emergency food vouchers, emergency utility payments; emergency rent payments, and the USDA commodity food distributions which are supported by RSVP volunteers.

UETHDA operates the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program which gives priority to seniors with low income and high energy bills. UETHDA also administers the Head Start Program which relies heavily on volunteers in the classrooms and on field trips.

The mission of UETHDA is to provide education, direction and support to individuals, families and organizations in order to strengthen and stabilize the community through collaborative efforts of Agency programs and cooperative partnerships. UETHDA's goal is to continue our service delivery and advocacy for the low-income population of Northeast Tennessee.

Describe your organizations capability in demonstrating strong organizational infrastructure, including (1) Tangible assets such as facilities, equipment, and supplies; (2) Governance structure and operations, such as internal policies, purchasing procedures, and personnel management; (3) Role of a community participation group, such as an RSVP Advisory Council, to ensure input from the community; and (4) The existence of robust management systems and past experience managing federal grant funds.

UETHDA's central office has been located in the City of Kingsport's V.O. Dobbins Non-Profit Center since 1965. The nine Neighborhood Service Centers are located in each county (two in Sullivan County) in offices rented by UETHDA's Community Services Block Grant program.

Narratives

UETHDA's purchasing procedures are approved by the Board of Directors and are designed to govern the purchase of supplies, equipment, contractual services and other items while conforming to restrictions made by federal and state grants. UETHDA's travel policy is regulated by The Department of Finance and Administration Comprehensive Travel Regulations utilizing the U.S. General Services Administration CONUS rates.

UETHDA's Policy and Procedure Manual is given to each new employee of the Agency and reviewed during orientation. The manual covers each employee's supervision and limitations, productive work environment, hours of work, termination of employment, payroll procedures, travel guidelines, employee benefits, employee safety, solicitation, attendance guidelines, conflicts of interest, customer relations, confidentiality, and grievance procedures. An annual training is required for all employees concerning laws on HIPPA, Title VI, and other employment laws.

The Accounting Department is proficient in CNCS reporting requirements, e-Grants System, budgetary guidelines, and PMS draw-down procedures. UETHDA has always submitted FFR's, PPR's, and all other requested reports in a timely manner. In the response letter from the Tennessee State CNCS Office monitoring visit in June 2012, Ms. Corindo states: "It was determined during the visit that the grantee, the Upper East Tennessee Human Development Agency, has strong fiscal systems in place which ensure appropriate check and balance tools are used to safeguard fiscal accountability."

UETHDA's tripartite Board of Directors is comprised of local elected officials; representatives for the low-income population from major groups in the community such as NAACP, First Tennessee Development District Area Agency on Aging and Disability, Eastman Chemical Company, First Community Bank, Rogersville Senior Center; and Northeast Tennessee Regional Health Council. The

Narratives

Board has representatives of the low-income from all eight counties of the service area. The UETHDA Board meets quarterly and reviews each program of the Agency including the RSVP program. The RSVP Project Director prepares a progress report each quarter for the quarterly board meeting and once each year does a detailed presentation to the board members about the program. All comments, questions and suggestions from the board members are welcomed by the project director to strengthen and enhance the RSVP program.

The Board of Directors conducts an annual survey of the volunteer work sites and the volunteers to ensure the operation of the program is meeting expectations of the volunteer stations and also those of the volunteers. Space is provided on the survey for comments and/or suggestions from work sites and from volunteers.

UETHDA has maintained a centralized accounting system since 1979. For over 35 years UETHDA has successfully managed CNCS programs including RSVP and AmeriCorps VISTA. Since CNCS implemented Impact-Based Programming, the RSVP program has successfully reported achievements. Each year an audit is performed on all of UETHDA's programs by an independent auditing firm with no findings having been found in the RSVP program.

Demonstrate how your organization will adequately sustain the proposed required non-federal share.

Since 1991, when the current project director started working in the RSVP office, the non-federal share of monies from the United Way of Greene County, the Carter County budget, the Greene County budget, and the Hawkins County budget has been the same except for a \$80 reduction in the Greene County budget in an across the board 2% cut, and a \$1,000 addition in the United Way budget. These

Narratives

contributions from our long-standing supporters total \$16,420 each year. RSVP staff prepares regular reports to these supporters demonstrating the volunteers' contributions in their communities. Should any of these supporters become unable to provide their support, UETHDA will solicit and obtain support from other sources in our area.

In addition, office space in-kind of \$4,382 for the RSVP central office is provided by the city of Kingsport and \$9,300 for the Greene County field coordinator's office is provided by the city of Greeneville. This in-kind added to the budget contributions supplies a total non-federal share of \$30,102, which is more than the required 30% match.

Also, an estimated \$1,000 will be raised through snack sales at the Central Office of UETHDA. The Appleby Vending Company supplies the snack and drink machines and services them each week. Once a quarter, Appleby Vending sends a commission check to RSVP for 10% of their total profits in those machines. This money requires no work from the RSVP staff.

Other

Not applicable.

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

Not applicable.