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Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Senior Citizens Council of Greater Augusta and the CSRA, Georgia Inc., is a private non-profit 501 c 3 organization serving the 13-county Central Savannah River Area (CSRA). The mission of the SCC is two-fold - to provide a diversity of services to senior adults and to enable them to apply their experience as a resource for meeting critical community needs. The SCC had been a leading provider of aging services since 1968 and has sponsored RSVP since 1981.

The SCC is requesting \$33, 128 to mobilize 75 RSVP volunteers in the following Strategic Focus Areas: Disaster Services --The Medical Reserve Corps, American Red Cross, and Sheppard Community Blood Center are supported by volunteers that enhance the capacity of these organizations to prepare and respond to disasters. Disaster Services is the Primary Focus Area we will address.

Healthy Futures -- At local senior centers, volunteers will lead fitness classes and assist with congregate meals; at the Anvil House they will tend a community garden, providing fresh, seasonal vegetables and nutrition information to low-income female headed families. In area parks, volunteers will lead activities to get people to outdoors and active.

Economic Opportunity --The Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) is a volunteer driven program providing education and assistance to potential small business owners to increase the success rate of the businesses

Environmental Stewardship -- Through the SCC, volunteers will conduct no-cost energy audits to senior citizens and offer suggestions to reduce their energy consumption costs.

Veteran's Services -- The VA Medical Center has identified veteran's living in rural CSRA that need transportation to medical appointments at the VA Medical Center in Augusta.

RSVP will measure impact primarily through participant surveys and from data collected from volunteer stations.

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Strengthening Communities

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

The potential service area of this project is the 13-county Central Savannah River Area (CSRA), Georgia. Most RSVP volunteers live and serve in metropolitan Richmond, Columbia, and McDuffie Counties, with volunteers serving rural Lincoln and Taliaferro Counties as requests for assistance in those counties is received. Recruiting volunteers in rural areas of the CSRA has been a challenge as most opportunities are concentrated in Augusta-Richmond County therefore RSVP is actively seeking out potential partnerships in our rural areas. In the Focus Area of Veteran's Service, RSVP is actively addressing this challenge through a partnership with The Veteran's Administration Medical Center (VAMC) Augusta. The VAMC has identified a need for reliable transportation for veteran's living in our rural counties who must travel to the VAMC in Augusta for treatment. RSVP volunteers will be trained to provide transportation service to our most rural veteran's.

Augusta is the second largest city in Georgia. It is home to Fort Gordon, and the population includes a number of military retirees as well as active duty military personnel. It also has a large medical community that includes the Georgia Health Sciences University and the VA Medical Center. The East Central Health District, which is home to the Augusta branch of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), is also located in Richmond County. The MRC is responsible for maintaining, responding to, and dispersing the regional Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) located within the CSRA. The SNS consists of medical and biological supplies to be activated in the event of an act of biological terrorism. With this in mind, this project has selected Disaster Services as the Primary Focus Area, with recruitment efforts focused on securing 25% of the total number of active RSVP volunteers for Disaster Services. RSVP volunteers regularly assist the MRC during mock disaster drills and with a variety of clinics (flu shot, back to school screening, etc.) as a vital part of the on-going training of crucial readiness of the SNS and emergency personnel to respond in the event of a true emergency. Additionally, plans are to

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build relationships with The Salvation Army and 2-1-1 Disaster Services in order to further strengthen the ability of the CSRA to respond in times of critical need.

Situated near Clarks Hill Lake and the Savannah River, the area has a large number of parks, campgrounds, and water recreational opportunities. In the Focus Area of Environmental Stewardship, RSVP volunteers participate in the annual "River's Alive" debris clean up along Savannah River tributaries, assist with educational classes that increase environmental awareness of area students, and increase visitation to these outdoor recreational areas by leading programs designed to get visitors outside and active.

Augusta-Richmond County has the lowest income residents of the primary counties served by this project, with 23.3 % living below the poverty level. Greater affluence and growth lies in west Augusta and neighboring Columbia County. The percentage of persons age 65+ is 10.5% in Columbia County and 11.5% in Augusta-Richmond County, making RSVP recruitment possible. Additionally, 21,044 veterans reside in Augusta-Richmond County alone, which is the highest concentration of veterans in the primary counties we serve. (<http://quickfacts.census.gov>). National Senior Service Corps (NSSC) project staff will concentrate on reaching out to Augusta-Richmond County and rural counties to develop volunteer stations and volunteer opportunities that serve persons in the six primary focus areas of Veteran's Service, Disaster Service, Environmental Stewardship, Economic Opportunity, Healthy Futures, and Education. Once identified, NSSC staff will work with these volunteer stations to define their needs and desired outcomes and mobilize RSVP volunteers to assist with meeting those needs.

In October 2012, a new Volunteer Services Chief was hired at the VAMC. During our initial meeting, many new opportunities for RSVP to serve veterans were discussed, including transporting vets from rural areas to medical appointments at the VAMC. NSSC staff was also invited to represent the project at quarterly Veteran's Administration Voluntary Services (VAVS) advisory group meetings. With

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members representing each organization serving vets at the local VAMC, Senior Corps staff will collaborate with other groups and contribute to veteran's service projects in the community. Both the new VAMC volunteer services staff and RSVP staff are excited to be working together on solutions to best meet the needs of veterans in the CSRA.

The NSSC staff represents the project by serving on community advisory boards and committees. By serving in this capacity, project staff has an excellent opportunity to provide a full spectrum of volunteer opportunities for our members.

The Senior Corps staff serves on several advisory panels for local organizations. The Senior Corps Project Director serves on the local MRC Advisory Committee and Life Skills for Women Advisory Council, as well as serving as Chairman of the local Chapter of the Council of Volunteer Administrators (COVA) and Friends of Mistletoe State Park. The Foster Grandparent Program Coordinator represents the NSSC Project at the Community Partnership meetings (many of the agencies represented at these meetings are Senior Corps volunteer stations serving low-income or at-risk children). Serving in these capacities helps NSSC project staff keep abreast of pressing community needs and better able to adjust program volunteers to assist with meeting current needs.

Recruitment and Development

RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Word of mouth continues to be the best tool for recruiting RSVP volunteers; however, an array of recruitment venues is utilized including the web-based sites of volunteermatch.com and volunteerAugusta.com. Also, as RSVP volunteers participate in community events, they share those experiences with friends, who are often recruited to assist with future events such as disaster drills, veteran's services, and literacy.

We have also utilized a bi-monthly local radio talk show to raise community awareness of the RSVP project and solicit volunteers. NSSC staff regularly makes speaking presentations to civic organizations

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and senior service organizations in the community.

Because The Senior Citizens Council administers all three Senior Corps programs, we have a joint Advisory Council. The Advisory Council consists of volunteer station and business representatives, a liaison from the sponsor's Board of Directors and the Executive Director, Senior Corps volunteers, staff, and the VISTA Supervisor from United Way of the CSRA. As these agency representatives bring unmet community needs of their organizations to the project's attention, RSVP volunteers are mobilized to assist with meeting those needs.

The Advisory Council holds an annual fall retreat during which it develops a strategic plan for the coming year, plans volunteer appreciation events and evaluation topics, as well as advises staff on recruitment efforts.

Both the Board of Directors and the NSSC Advisory Council assist the project with recruitment by representing the programs in the community. NSSC staff represents the programs by serving on community advisory boards and committees. By cultivating these relationships and learning of unmet community needs, RSVP offers an excellent opportunity to provide a full spectrum of volunteer opportunities for our members.

The NSSC staff works closely with volunteer stations to develop volunteer job descriptions. In November 2012, a Veteran's Center will open near downtown Augusta. RSVP is working with VA staff to provide age eligible veterans they serve with volunteer opportunities in one or more of the primary focus areas. Additionally, some of our Foster Grandparent and Senior Companions enjoy a variety of RSVP opportunities and have participated in disaster drills through the MRC, working alongside emergency response personnel as they hone their skills.

Racially and ethnically, there is little diversity in our service area, In Augusta-Richmond County 54.4% of the population is black and 40.8% is white, for a total of 94.2% of the total population. Other counties are similar. (<http://quickfacts.census.gov>). Volunteers of all ethnic backgrounds are

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encouraged to enroll in RSVP.

Our project brings together people of diverse ages by placing senior volunteers alongside younger workers in volunteer stations. In these working relationships, individuals cross age barriers and learn to appreciate each other for their unique gifts and talents.

Program Management

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

The Project Director served as the Deputy Project Director from 1997 until agency re-structuring in May 2012. At that time, she was asked to serve in an Interim Senior Corps Project Director for the Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion, and RSVP programs pending CNCS and sponsor Board approval. The Board is scheduled to vote to offer the Interim PD the full PD position at the October 2012 Board meeting. Additionally, current NSSC staff is highly qualified and has over 12 years of project management experience, mitigating disruption in project operation during this transition period.

The NSSC project staff participates in monthly staff meetings with the Executive Director and Contracted CFO to review project progress, challenges, share program updates, and discusses issues related to the overall operation of the Senior Citizens Council. NSSC program reports are generated monthly from volunteer time sheets and included in the Senior Citizens Council Board of Directors Board Report. Purchases, general agency and program related, are paid based upon receipt of a check request and supporting documentation, approved and signed by the Project Director and the Executive Director, and submitted to the Contracted CFO. Checks are signed by two persons designated by the Board of Directors, neither of whom prepared the checks,

Our project has been a leader in outcome-based programming, developing assignment plans and impact measurement tools that were included in the CNCS National Toolkit, and when the United Way of the CSRA implemented a similar means of determining impact for its partner agencies (our

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sponsor, The Senior Citizens Council is a UW partner agency) we were able to use our experience to secure funding for the Senior Companion Program.

We are constantly looking for volunteer stations offering new and interesting volunteer experiences for our volunteers, with particular emphasis on Disaster Services, Literacy, Veteran's Service, Environmental Stewardship, Economic Opportunity, and Healthy Futures. RSVP is working to develop new volunteer stations with volunteer opportunities that meet National Performance Measure outcomes, as well as working with current volunteer stations to align volunteer opportunities with those outcomes.

This past year the United Way of the CSRA conducted a community needs assessment for Richmond County and is in the process of compiling data collected in neighboring Columbia County. RSVP volunteers were encouraged to participate in the on-line survey, which will be used to direct services in the coming years.

Throughout the years we have had regular project performance assessments by our Advisory Council. Project management, including record-keeping and checks of individual volunteer folders, is a regular part of the Project Director and Executive Director job responsibilities.

Organizational Capability

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The Senior Citizens Council has successfully managed Senior Cops programs for the past 30 years. The new NSSC Project Director has 20+ years of experience as a Senior Corps Coordinator; two Volunteer Coordinators each have 5 years of service to seniors, and a part-time Records Coordinator (a former bank manager and RSVP volunteer) was hired in June 2012. Our project staff maintains a high- quality, professional relationship with each volunteer station and is successful in working with personnel at those stations to secure necessary data for impact reporting. It is due to these positive relationships that we have been successful in meeting project goals and outcomes. Additionally, the

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joint Senior Corps Advisory Council assists with project management and community support.

Through the years, The Senior Citizens Council has managed federal grants from the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Department of Health and Human Services- Aging Cluster, and has demonstrated a strong organizational infrastructure. Our contracted CFO has managed federal grants for over 20 years in both this agency and other agencies as well.

Our agency departments include the Senior Corps (which is fully-funded through CNCS, United Way, and Augusta-Richmond County) and the senior Advocacy Department. Our Advocacy Department Director also serves as the part-time Executive Director.

In accordance with General Accounting Principles, purchases originating with the project (volunteer recognition items, staff travel reimbursements, etc.) are paid based on the Finance Department's receipt of a check request and supporting documentation, signed by the Project Director, and approved by the Executive Director in accordance with CNCS regulations. Items for general agency use (copy paper, cleaning supplies, toner cartridges, etc.) are secured by the Executive Director or the contracted CFO, and charged to appropriate line items. Allowable Volunteer expenses (criminal background checks, supplies) are paid from check requests with supporting documentation, verified and approved by the Project Director, the Executive Director, and the checks are written by the contracted CFO.

They are signed by two persons designated by the sponsor Board, neither of whom prepared the checks.

The Project Director works with the contracted CFO and the Executive Director to understand and manage the various grants secured by the project and the agency to ensure that funds are used correctly and not over-spent. Richmond County provides approximately \$49,000 annually, and United Way provides \$45,000 annually to our Senior Companion Program. As we are a joint project, these grants help meet our local match requirement and additional cash is generated by an annual agency fund raiser.

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During the re-structuring process, the need for securing additional funding opportunities was identified and has become an on-going part of the Project Director's responsibilities. The Project Director will work to adequately sustain project match needs by securing allowable in-kind donations and additional sources of revenue, such as grants.

In-kind forms are collected from volunteer stations and individuals who provide resources, and are recorded by the Project Director in appropriate line-items on a spreadsheet that is then forwarded to the contracted CFO for inclusion in the end of the year financial reports.

This project is also included in our sponsor's annual audit by a CPA firm.

With direction and support from the Senior Citizens Council Board of Director's and the NSSC Advisory Council, along with the history of successful project management of RSVP since 1981, RSVP will meet the goals CNCS has outlined in the Kennedy Serve America Act to best serve the population of the CSRA.

Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A