

## PART I - FACE SHEET

<b>APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE</b>		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction														
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to confirm to the Corporation's eGrants System)																
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS): 10/17/12	3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:														
2b. APPLICATION ID: 13SR143641	4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY: 10/17/12	FEDERAL IDENTIFIER:														
<b>5. APPLICATION INFORMATION</b>																
LEGAL NAME: Greater Erie Community Action Committee DUNS NUMBER: 010444453	NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Ron Howze															
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 18 West Ninth St Erie PA 16501 - 1343 County: Erie	TELEPHONE NUMBER: 8144594581x457 FAX NUMBER: 8144560161 INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: rhowze@gecac.org															
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 256068246	7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit 7b. Community Action Agency/Community Action Program															
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> A. AUGMENTATION      B. BUDGET REVISION C. NO COST EXTENSION D. OTHER (specify below):	9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: <b>Corporation for National and Community Service</b>															
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER: 94.002 10b. TITLE: Retired and Senior Volunteer Program	11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: GECAC RSVP															
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): Erie County, Pennsylvania	11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):															
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 07/01/13      END DATE: 06/30/16	14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF:    a.Applicant <input type="text" value="PA 003"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="PA 003"/>															
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: 1	16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS? <input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON: DATE: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372															
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; font-size: small;"> <tr><td style="width: 20%;">a. FEDERAL</td><td style="text-align: right;">\$ 68,672.00</td></tr> <tr><td>b. APPLICANT</td><td style="text-align: right;">\$ 71,791.00</td></tr> <tr><td>c. STATE</td><td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td></tr> <tr><td>d. LOCAL</td><td style="text-align: right;">\$ 71,791.00</td></tr> <tr><td>e. OTHER</td><td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td></tr> <tr><td>f. PROGRAM INCOME</td><td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td></tr> <tr><td>g. TOTAL</td><td style="text-align: right;">\$ 140,463.00</td></tr> </table>	a. FEDERAL	\$ 68,672.00	b. APPLICANT	\$ 71,791.00	c. STATE	\$ 0.00	d. LOCAL	\$ 71,791.00	e. OTHER	\$ 0.00	f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00	g. TOTAL	\$ 140,463.00	17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
a. FEDERAL	\$ 68,672.00															
b. APPLICANT	\$ 71,791.00															
c. STATE	\$ 0.00															
d. LOCAL	\$ 71,791.00															
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00															
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00															
g. TOTAL	\$ 140,463.00															
18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.																
a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: Ronald A. Steele	b. TITLE: Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (814) 459-4581 415														
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:		e. DATE SIGNED: 10/17/12														

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

The Greater Erie Community Action Committee located in Erie County, Pennsylvania has served as the RSVP provider since 1974. In this capacity, thousands of senior volunteers have been matched with non-profits to meet the ever changing needs of our community.

GECAC is proposing to serve 500 volunteers, age 55 and older. The Primary Focus Area of these volunteer placements will be Healthy Futures. Of the 500 volunteers enrolled in GECAC RSVP, 42% will be placed in the service activities of food delivery, distribution of information, companionship/ respite care, and food collection and distribution. The efforts of volunteers in these service activities will lead to the National Performance Measure outputs and outcomes related to these areas.

Additionally, 29% of the volunteers will be placed in other focus areas of Education, Economic Opportunity, Environmental Stewardship, Veteran's Assistance and Capacity Building. The remaining 29% of volunteers will serve in stations related to other community priorities.

To develop volunteer stations, relationships have been established with a variety of area non-profits. The RSVP Director works with these non-profits to develop Memorandums of Understanding and to assist with ongoing training and technical assistance. The Director also assists the stations with gathering the information necessary for reporting on the National Performance Indicators.

## Strengthening Communities

Q1. \* 1 in 5 Erie County seniors lives with an income below 150% of the federal poverty guidelines. (2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS))

\* Nearly half of Erie County seniors live alone. (2006-2010 ACS)

\* 60% of seniors report food insecurity (Hunger in America 2010)

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\* 12% of children under age 18 are forced to skip meals due to food insecurity (Hunger in America 2010)

These four statistics comprise a sampling of the data that led the Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC) to choose Healthy Futures as our primary focus area for the RSVP program. Located in northwestern Pennsylvania, Erie County is home to poverty and elderly populations that have grown over the last several years. Of the 280,566 residents that call Erie County, PA home, 14.6% (40,962) are age 65 or older. 8.4% live with incomes below the poverty line, and an additional 11.7% live with incomes between 100-150% poverty (2006-2010 ACS). 48.4% of the elderly live alone. Three of the main issues facing low-income seniors are food security, access to healthcare, and companionship. Of the households receiving food from local food pantries, 22.6% contain at least one adult over the age of 65 (Hunger in America 2010). According to the records of the Erie County Area Agency on Aging (AAA) operated by GECAC, 695 elderly adults were identified who are unable to prepare their own meals and do not have any other reliable individual to do this for them. 676 received home delivered meals, while 19 were placed on a wait list due to an insufficient number of volunteers to deliver those meals and/ or a lack of agency funding to provide the meals.

Elderly residents also struggle to understand the complexity of the healthcare system resulting in challenges related to access to care. 28.3% of the 486 consumers responding to a survey regarding the current needs of the elderly conducted by the Erie County AAA indicated that access to health care was a concern. Additionally, approximately 50% of the respondents indicated challenges related to insurance and medical questions, costs of healthcare, and access to healthcare in the open-ended section of the survey. In 2011, 300 elderly individuals sought assistance from the Apprise program to answer insurance-related questions.

Additionally, as seniors grow frailer due to health problems, isolation becomes a concern. Family members and community representatives participating in the survey and focus groups expressed

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concerns that they are unable to visit and to assist senior family members as often as they would like due to other obligations. With over 48% of seniors living alone, companionship services assist with decreasing depression caused by isolation and providing regular contact to check on the senior's overall well-being.

The challenges of poverty are not isolated to just the elderly. 15.6% (43,768) Erie County residents of all ages live in households with an income below the federal poverty level (2006-2010 ACS). Individuals with low incomes struggle with food security and access to health care. In a survey conducted by the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest PA, 70.4% of emergency food recipients reported being food insecure despite the help they received from food pantries, kitchens, or shelters. 32% of the households receiving food from food pantries contained at least one child under the age of 18 (Hunger in America 2010). Volunteers are essential to the continued operation of emergency food distribution facilities, and more volunteers are needed. In the same Hunger in American 2010 report, 14.6% of food pantries indicated that volunteer shortages had affected continued operations of their facilities.

Q2. To address the community needs of aging in place, food security, and access to care identified in the Primary Focus Area of Healthy Futures, GECAC RSVP will continue to grow and nurture relationships with volunteer stations and volunteers to manage their efforts to address these needs. Through over 39 years of managing RSVP in Erie County, PA, GECAC has developed numerous partnerships with volunteer stations that have missions aligned with the needs of the community as identified through our annual community assessments. At least 25% of volunteers will be placed in volunteer assignments at stations addressing these needs.

When developing a new volunteer station, the RSVP director meets with the volunteer coordinator and/ or executive staff of the station to discuss the needs their agency is attempting to address and how RSVP volunteers could assist with providing services to meet those needs. The RSVP director

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works with the station to develop a detailed job description for each volunteer position to ensure that the placements properly address the targeted community need and focus area. During this setup time, the RSVP director also works with the volunteer station's staff to develop the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing the responsibilities of GECAC RSVP and responsibilities of the volunteer station. Specific goals will be developed for each volunteer station in the Primary Focus Area related to aging in place, food security, and access to care.

After a station has been developed, the RSVP Director works to identify volunteers who are age-eligible for the program and are interested in serving in a role that will meet the community needs. The RSVP Director conducts ongoing outreach for volunteers using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to: making presentations at community organizations and retiree associations, contacting the Human Resources Departments of local employers, such as General Electric, St. Vincent Hospital, UPMC Hamot Hospital, and Erie Insurance Exchange to engage retiring staff, and distributing flyers at community events and gatherings, as well as, Senior Expos sponsored by state and local legislators.

Potential volunteers complete an intake form that contains basic demographic information. The potential volunteers also complete an inventory that will identify their skills and interests and experiences. Based on these skills, interests and experiences, the RSVP Director presents the potential volunteer's information to the appropriate volunteer site(s). The volunteer site supervisor at the station interviews the potential volunteer and determines if the individual would be a good fit for that assignment. If they are, the volunteer is placed at the location. If not, their information is presented to other volunteer stations until a good match is found.

Once volunteers have been placed at volunteer stations, the RSVP Director and volunteer site supervisor will work together to ensure that all parties fulfill their obligations as delineated in the MOU. Each site is monitored every 6 months to measure their outcomes as they relate to the goals

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enumerated in the MOU. Goals will relate directly to the Primary Focus Area (Aging in Place, Access to Care, Food Security). This ongoing monitoring of the work of the volunteers as it relates to the outcomes established by CNCS will help to ensure that the volunteers and their stations are having a significant impact on the Healthy Futures focus area.

While day-to-day supervision of the volunteers is the responsibility of the volunteer site supervisor, the RSVP Director is available to provide additional support and to assist with new placements if the original placement does not work. Additionally, the RSVP Director works with the volunteer site coordinator to ensure that data needed to report on outputs and outcomes is collected using the national tools provided by CNCS. The RSVP Director will provide support to the volunteer site supervisor to help meet their outcome goals through training and recruitment.

A key element of program management and assessment is data management. Each volunteer site records and submits volunteer hours and other appropriate information to the RSVP Director. This is entered into the RSVP Reporter program. This is vital in managing station rosters and tracking active and inactive volunteers.

Q3. The service activities chosen for the volunteer stations in the Healthy Futures focus area will directly lead to the outputs and outcomes of the National Performance Measures.

For persons who are aging in place and cannot prepare a meal, food delivery through Meals on Wheels is an essential service to be able to stay in one's own home. Not only does the homebound individual receive a hot and nutritious meal five days per week allowing them to live independently, but the RSVP Volunteer also provides socialization. This helps to increase the social ties and perceived social support of the homebound individuals. Our volunteers are able to help many seniors to stay in their own home with the same or improved quality of life due to the service of the volunteers.

Another important service for individuals who are aging in place is companionship and respite care. For individuals at risk of falling or the effects of social isolation (i.e. depression), regular contacts

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through the companionship activities of regular phone calls or visits help to ensure the ongoing safety of the homebound individual. These activities allow the individual to remain living independently for a longer period of time and increase their social ties and perceived social supports.

Many families in America are subject to food emergencies. These emergencies happen for a vast number of reasons. Whether caused by lack of income due to sudden unemployment, an unexpected health concern, natural disaster or a change in family dynamics, these families, often with children, do not have enough nutritious food to eat and must turn to food banks and food pantries to meet their immediate food needs. By engaging in the activities of food collection and food distribution, RSVP volunteers serving at the food pantries and food banks will help individuals to receive emergency food assistance resulting in increased food security for themselves and their children.

Access to care is a major problem for many seniors. Insurance programs are complex and ever changing, causing many in the senior population to be unaware of benefits for which they are eligible. APPRISE utilizes RSVP volunteer counselors who receive special training to answer questions about Original Medicare, Medicaid, Medigap, long term care insurance, and preventive care. These volunteers then help to distribute information and answer questions regarding health insurance, health care access, and health benefits programs. These services help to improve access to primary and preventive health care for seniors in Erie County.

Q4. As mentioned previously, the Primary Focus Area chosen based on community needs is Healthy Futures. Of the 500 volunteers enrolled in GECAC RSVP, 42% will be placed in the service activities of food delivery, distribution of information, companionship/ respite care, and food collection and distribution. The efforts of volunteers in these service activities will lead to the National Performance Measure outputs and outcomes as detailed below.

Of the 280,566 residents that call Erie County, PA home, 14.6% (40,962) are age 65 or older. 8.4% live with incomes below the poverty line, and an additional 11.7% live with incomes between 100-

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150% poverty (2006-2010 ACS). 60% of seniors report food insecurity (Hunger in America 2010) To address the objective focused on Homebound Seniors and Disabled Individuals, 70 RSVP volunteers will serve in the Food Delivery service activity at 8 Meals-on-Wheels sites across Erie County, PA. Volunteers at these stations will transport hot meals five days per week to the homebound or older adults and individual with disabilities. As a result of the volunteers' work in this service activity, it is anticipated that over 500 homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities will receive food that will allow them to live independently (output H8). Also, due to the daily visits of the volunteers delivering the meals, it is anticipated that 375 homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities will report having increased social ties/ perceived social support (outcome H9).

Additionally, 48.4% of the elderly live alone. Seniors who live alone are at an increased risk of depression and other mental health issues caused by social isolation. To address the objective of assisting homebound individuals, 20 RSVP volunteers will serve at the Barnett Senior Complex as Friendly Visitors or at the Union City Senior Center in the TeleCare project. Through the service activity of companionship, volunteers will make regular contact via phone calls or face-to-face visits to ensure the ongoing wellbeing of homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities living in the Albion and Union City areas of Erie County, PA. Without this regular contact, these individuals would be at risk for social isolation resulting in a dangerous situation should the individual fall or become ill. If concerns arise regarding the wellbeing of one of the senior participants, the volunteer will inform their site supervisor who will follow-up on the situation. As a result of the volunteers' work in this service activity, it is anticipated that 75 homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities will receive regular contacts that will allow them to live independently (output H8). Also, due to the regular contacts of the volunteers, it is anticipated that 60 homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities will report having increased social ties/ perceived social support (outcome H9).

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With almost 16% of Erie County's residents living with incomes below the poverty line, taking time away from a job to care for a family member with a disability or terminal illness reduces income that is already too low to pay the monthly bills. The stress of choosing between being with an ill family member or being at work to pay the bills puts an added burden on many families. The final service activity to address the objective to assist homebound individuals is that of Companionship/ Respite Care. Six (6) RSVP volunteers will serve with the Erie County Pennsylvania Visiting Nurses Association to provide supportive services for individuals and/ or family members of individuals with disabilities and/ or who are terminally ill. As a result of the service of these volunteers, it is anticipated that 55 caregivers of homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities will receive respite services (output H13). The outcome of this will be that 45 caregivers of homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities will report having increased social ties/ perceived social support (outcome H14).

28.3% of the 486 consumers responding to a survey regarding the current needs of the elderly conducted by the Erie County AAA indicated that access to health care was a concern. Additionally, approximately 50% of the respondents indicated challenges related to insurance and medical questions, costs of healthcare, and access to healthcare in the open-ended section of the survey. To address the Healthy Futures objective of Increasing Access to Health Care, 10 volunteers will serve with the GECAC/Erie County Pennsylvania APPRISE program conducting the service activity of Distribution of Information. These volunteers will distribute information concerning Medicare and Medicaid insurance benefits, give presentations to the general public and/ or community groups on APPRISE services, and conduct other APPRISE outreach -- all with the objective of increasing knowledge regarding health insurance options. As a result of the information distribution efforts of these volunteers, it is anticipated that 300 clients will receive information on health insurance, health care access or health benefits programs.

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In a survey conducted by the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest PA, 70.4% of emergency food recipients reported being food insecure despite the help they received from food pantries, kitchens, or shelters. 32% of the households receiving food from food pantries contained at least one child under the age of 18 (Hunger in America 2010). Volunteers serving in the food collection & distribution service activity will help to address the Healthy Futures objective of Reducing Childhood Obesity and Increasing Access to Nutritious Food. Fifty (50) RSVP volunteers will serve at 2 local food pantries, and 52 will serve at the local Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwestern Pennsylvania also located in the City of Erie. The volunteers will collect donated food items, repackage donated food items to ensure that the items are safe for distribution, and assist with distribution to individuals needing emergency food assistance. Through the efforts of these volunteers, 4,400 individuals will receive emergency food from food banks, food pantries, or other nonprofit organizations.

Q5. The GECAC RSVP program will have the Pennsylvania Soldiers and Sailors Home and the Erie VA Hospital as Volunteer Stations. Both of these stations work specifically with veterans and their families. Twenty RSVP volunteers at the Soldiers and Sailors Home serve in the area of Companion Outreach providing home visits to homebound veterans. They also will provide service eligibility information and act as escorts and recreational aides for the Veteran residents. At The Erie VA Hospital, the RSVP Volunteers will serve as escorts in the hospital, volunteer in the cafeteria and the hospital store, and serve as Chaplin escorts.

In addition to these two stations that work specifically with veterans, a number of the other stations also serve veterans as part of their overall clientele. For example, the Meals on Wheels program has approximately 88 participants who are veterans or dependent on veterans.

### **Recruitment and Development**

Q6. GECAC RSVP will partner with community agencies to provide significant volunteer services which impact the local community needs in accordance to the Corporation for National and

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Community Service focus areas that will provide high quality experience for the volunteers. The project will develop volunteer stations in the focus areas of: Environmental Stewardship, Economic Opportunity, Education, Capacity Building, Veterans and Military Families and Healthy Futures.

A wide array of service activities is available. This allows the program to provide service opportunities to match the skills and interests of an equally wide variety of volunteers. The project encourages volunteer participants to expand their horizons and choose a new service area that interests them and allows for personal growth. In order to provide a high quality volunteer experience, the project will pursue the following steps: 1) to provide short and long term volunteer experiences for 500 volunteers; 2) to place at least 25% of volunteer participants (unduplicated), in the projects chosen Primary Focus Area (Healthy Future); 3) to assure that at least 10% of the participating volunteers are placed in outcome assignments and 4) to make a conscious effort to re-educate volunteers concerning the new direction of CNCS focus areas.

The goal of the GECAC RSVP staff is to ensure that volunteers are able to share their life experiences, abilities, and skills to improve their community. Potential volunteers complete an intake form that contains basic demographic information. The potential volunteers also complete an inventory that will identify their abilities, skills and interests. The RSVP Coordinator personally interviews each potential volunteer after their interest inventory has been scored to better understand their life experience so they can be considered in the volunteer match. Based on these skills interests and, experiences the RSVP Director presents the potential volunteer's information to the appropriate volunteer site(s).

Volunteers will be given a satisfaction survey twice a year to determine if their needs are being met by their placement. This will allow volunteers to be reassigned if necessary, and it will allow for continuous improvement of the sites through constructive feedback.

Q7. Appropriate training will be provided to the RSVP staff, participants and volunteer station

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supervisors. RSVP project staff will attend regional, state, and national conferences. Some of the trainings will be presented by the Senior Corps of PA Directors Association, of which GECAC RSVP is a member. The RSVP staff will provide volunteers with training concerning program operation, volunteer benefits, and an overview of Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS).

The workstation supervisors will provide orientation and training/ in-service instruction that is specific to the volunteer position. The content, intensity and length of the training will depend on the skills required to complete the volunteer's duties as identified in the volunteer job description. GECAC RSVP also will provide its volunteers with information about services available in the community to enable the volunteers to better serve clients and themselves. GECAC RSVP will work with the volunteer site supervisors to monitor each station's outcomes on a monthly basis to determine if additional staff or volunteer training is indicated.

The RSVP director will provide training and orientation for all new volunteer station supervisors and for returning volunteer station supervisors, as needed. This training will explain: what is Senior Corps, the purpose of Senior Corps, how Senior Corps relates to the station's mission, how to help identify new areas that can be enhanced through volunteer service, what are the Focus Areas and what do they mean to the program and community, the impact of Senior Corps on a national basis, the station's responsibilities, the sponsor's responsibilities, and benefits for the volunteer including insurance and mileage reimbursement. The RSVP director also will detail rules, regulations and reporting requirements, including daily sign in and sign out requirements, time sheets, policies and procedures for terminations, and outcome measurement reports/ tools required by CNCS to obtain data for the required reports. Volunteer station supervisors will be grouped together for these trainings so that stations with similar goals or impact measurements will be trained at the same time, allowing program staff to focus the training on topics specific to each group. GECAC RSVP staff also will produce and distribute a bi-annual report to volunteers and stations. This report will highlight the

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project's progress and relay changes from CNCS as they affect the volunteers.

Q8. Serving Erie since 1965, GECAC has a long history of bringing together people of diverse backgrounds to mobilize community resources. GECAC partners with over 300 community organizations to provide a comprehensive network of services to over 50,000 individuals per year. These partnerships include multicultural organizations, major community-based and faith-based non-profits, and individuals/ businesses from the business, banking, education, and social service sectors.

These partnerships put GECAC RSVP in a strong position to mobilize resources around a common goal. GECAC Board of Directors and the Aging Division Advisory Council are made up of a diverse population of citizens in Erie. They are both resources for the RSVP Program Director. They help raise awareness of RSVP in the general public and make specific recommendations to the program.

GECAC's long involvement in the community gives the RSVP director contacts and credibility that will enhance his ability to successfully recruit from these special populations.

RSVP will give special recruitment emphasis to individuals of all races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and degrees of English language proficiency; retired and semi-retired professionals; and volunteers who have physical or mental challenges, including individuals with age-related disabilities.

The RSVP Director conducts ongoing outreach for all types of volunteers using a variety of methods, including, but not limited to: presentations at community events and gatherings, distributing flyers, and attending 6 senior EXPOS sponsored by local legislators. Outreach to local service clubs is only one of the many ways that RSVP spreads the word about the program to find volunteers. Outreach to local Business and Manufacturing Associations retiree groups, such as General Electric and the Manufacturers Association of Erie provide valuable contact for recruitment.

Q9. Retention of RSVP volunteers is essential to overall program success. Ongoing efforts to monitor volunteer satisfaction, reaffirm station/ volunteer fit, and recognize volunteers help GECAC RSVP to retain a large percentage of our volunteers. During our last three year program cycle, the program

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averaged a 75.6% retention rate of volunteers.

Regularly scheduled site visits are conducted by the RSVP Director at each volunteer station. These visits provide the director with an opportunity to gauge the overall satisfaction of the volunteers. Additionally, volunteers are asked to complete a satisfaction survey on an annual basis. If there is dissatisfaction between the volunteer and the station, the director would work to correct the situation either through mediation or placement at a new station.

GECAC RSVP will recognize the efforts of all volunteers. On an annual basis, all volunteers, no matter how many hours they serve, will receive a letter from the program thanking them for their service. Additionally, the program will hold an annual recognition event to present service awards to volunteers who contributed five hundred (500) or more hours during the program year. At this event, the volunteers will receive Certificates of Appreciation and be thanked by federal and state elected officials. In addition to the recognitions provided by the program, many of the individual stations hold their own events, where volunteers are recognized for their contributions.

### Program Management

Q11. The RSVP Director will work directly with station supervisors to ensure that management of the volunteer stations is in compliance with RSVP program regulations. Each station director signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with GECAC RSVP indicating the station's responsibilities and GECAC RSVP's responsibilities, as well as, information regarding activities prohibited by RSVP's federal guidelines. The RSVP director trains all new station supervisors to ensure that they understand what activities are prohibited. Station supervisors are instructed that activities, such as, but not limited to: religious instruction, worship services, proselytization, electoral activities, voter registration, transportation to polls or efforts to influence legislation, activities performed that displace paid workers, and accepting money or donations from their service recipients or relatives and friends of service recipients are prohibited.

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Additionally, the RSVP Director ensures that all RSVP volunteer stations understand that they must actively comply with provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, which prohibits discrimination based on sex, race, age, disability, color, national origin, creed, belief, or political affiliation.

If a station is found to not be in compliance with RSVP regulations, the RSVP Director would work directly with the director of the station and the station supervisor to immediately correct the problem. If the problem could not be corrected, the RSVP program would start the process of graduating the station and moving RSVP volunteers to other stations.

Q12. Volunteer Stations are selected according to their demonstrated level of need. The GECAC Planning Department conducts community needs assessments each year for the entire agency and once every four years for the AAA. These assessments provide an analysis of the local community needs and document the service gaps that exist.

Based on these community needs assessments, particular needs for our community were identified in the areas of Education, Economic Opportunity, Environmental Stewardship, and Capacity Building. Additionally, other community priorities were identified that addressed needs in the areas of victim advocacy, congregate meals, support for local libraries and museums, sewing circles and the development of educational toys for preschool programs. Specific statistics to support these needs include:

\* 43.3% of children under age five live in low-income families in 2009, up from 41.9% the previous year; 18.6% of births in 2009 were to mothers with less than a high school education, up from 17.3% the previous year; and 26.1% of third graders scored below proficient on the 2009 PSSA reading test, up from 23.8% the previous year. Research has shown that children affected by risk factors such as poverty, family status, or poor school system, are more likely to enter school behind their peers, struggle in school, or drop out altogether. When compared to the best counties in Pennsylvania

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regarding risk factors for young children, Erie County is substantially worse in every measurement. In order for the future of these children and our community to be successful, these trends must be addressed and reversed evidencing the need for early childhood and after school mentoring programs.

\* With unemployment rates hovering around 7.1% and poverty rates at 17.4%, requests for financial counseling have been steadily rising over the last several years. One program that helps families increase their financial capacity is the Earned Income Tax Credit program. In tax year 2010, over 26.8 million people received the EITC, totaling almost 59.5 billion dollars (EITC Statistics, 2012). According to IRS records, 900,061 EITC claims were filed in the state of Pennsylvania for a total of \$1,810,000,000 (\$1.81 billion). That makes the average amount for each claim \$2,012 (EITC Statistics, 2012). Despite the sizable benefits, it is estimated that 20-25% of eligible tax filers do not claim the EITC (Institute for a Competitive Workforce, 2007). Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Centers are needed to assist low-income individuals with filing their taxes and claiming the tax credits due to them.

\* With a 2012 area median income (AMI) of \$58,700, incomes in Erie County are lower than the state and national averages. However, housing rates also are lower. The average monthly cost of homeownership for families with a mortgage is \$1100, compared to \$1390 for Pennsylvania and a national average of \$1496. With proper pre-purchase counseling and budgeting skills, even low to moderate income families can achieve and maintain homeownership despite a challenging environment. Housing programs to develop low-cost housing stock are needed to assist low-income families with the dream of homeownership.

\* Located on one of the Great Lakes, Erie County takes pride in its beautiful environment. However, recent funding cuts have decreased the resources available to keep public natural areas free from debris. Volunteers are needed to assist with cleaning up public land to keep our community a beautiful one.

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\* According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, transfer payments to non-profits decreased sharply from a high of \$32.2 million in 2005 to a low of \$28.7 million in 2008 before starting to rise again. In an effort to meet the demand for increased services during a time when funding was shrinking, many local non-profits turned to fundraising activities. While these fundraising activities helped to alleviate some of the gaps to fund specific programs, they put a burden on staff whose time already was stretched thin. Volunteers are needed to help these agencies fund raise to increase their capacity to provide programming to meet a variety of local needs.

\* Each day, over 880 seniors visit local senior centers to receive a hot meal. For 53% of these seniors, this is one of only two hot meals they receive daily. The two paid staff members at each senior center struggle to meet the demands of providing these meals to such a large number of seniors in a timely fashion. Volunteers are needed to assist with these daily congregate meals.

\* Staff at long-term care facilities spend most of their days meeting the physical needs of the nearly 2,000 senior residents. These staff rely on volunteers to assist with recreational and social activities with the seniors to ensure they are experiencing a well rounded living environment. Additionally, volunteers assist the Ombudsman program to help inform seniors of their rights while living in these facilities.

\* There were 850 reported cases of child abuse in Erie County in 2011. Of these, 11% were substantiated. CASA volunteers serve as the voice of the child during court hearings to determine the child's best placement.

\* Deep cuts from both the state and local government funding have forced the Erie County library system to cut hours and days of service at local library branches. Volunteers have helped to keep the computer lab and genealogy projects operating at a time when these services also might have been cut. Area museums also have felt the effects of these cuts and are relying heavily on volunteers to maintain museum programming.

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\* Several of the local, non-profit Early Childhood providers are required to meet standards to provide blankets for naptime and educational toys to supplement their curricula. These providers often do not have the funds to replenish these supplies on a regular basis. Volunteers who make these blankets and toys are able to help the agencies meet their requirements without putting a financial drain on the agency.

GECAC RSVP uses annual community needs assessments to identify organizations in the area that will have the most beneficial impact on the documented needs of the community. No matter if the stations are in the primary focus area or other community priorities, the development and monitoring will be the same. RSVP selects community partners and volunteer stations that have missions aligned with the local needs and who can fill the gaps, as well as, those that meet the Corporation-wide Strategic Initiatives.

Q13. At this time, GECAC RSVP does not have the need to graduate any volunteer stations as all current stations have been aligned with the focus areas or other community priorities based on community needs. However, if in the future, the need to graduate a station arose, the program would work closely with both the volunteers and the station to ensure a smooth transition. First volunteers located at the graduating station would be informed of the reasons for graduating the station. Second the RSVP Director would review the volunteer's interest survey/ skills assessment with the volunteer to determine if any changes should be made. Based on the volunteer's interests and skills, the RSVP Director would work with each volunteer to identify a new placement in one of the other RSVP stations. The RSVP Director would assist with setting up interviews between the station director and the volunteer and work quickly to facilitate the new placement to reduce the length of the gap in service between the old placement and the new one.

To assist the station that is being graduated, RSVP would identify one or more RSVP volunteers work with the station in the role of capacity building. These RSVP volunteers would help to identify

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non-RSVP volunteers to carry on the work of the station.

Q14. A key element of program management and assessment is data management. Each volunteer site records and submits via email and fax volunteer hours and other appropriate information to the RSVP director. This information is entered into the RSVP Reporter database. All information for outputs and outcomes relating to the National Performance Measures will be gathered using the tools identified by CNCS for that particular output or outcome. For stations in the Primary Focus Area of Healthy Futures, these tools will include: grantee reports and logs of interactions with clients (H2), client tracking systems (H8, H10 and H13), the Senior Corps Independent Living Performance Measure Survey (H9), the Senior Corps Respite Performance Measure Survey (H14), and a post-program questionnaire modeled on the Household Food Security survey (H12).

For stations in the other focus areas, these tools will include: tracking documents measuring acres improved (EN4) or tons of materials collected and recycled (EN6), sign-in sheets and attendance logs (O1 and O2), housing assistance tracking logs (O5), proof of occupancy (O11), attendance sheet and retention/ attrition rate tracking (ED4A and ED21), and receipts of cash resources raised specifically as a result of capacity building activities leveraged by CNCS-supported service participants (G3-3.16).

The output of the stations in the Other Community Priority areas will be measured based on volunteer attendance logs as reported by the volunteer stations and entered into RSVP Reporter. Both the number of volunteers and the number of hours volunteered will be tracked for these stations.

To ensure the ongoing progress towards program goals, all GECAC program supervisors meet with the VP of Operations and the Planning Department staff to participate in a formative evaluation process on a quarterly basis. During these meetings, each program's progress towards their overall goals is analyzed and opportunities and challenges are discussed. This allows the agency to track ongoing progress and head off any challenges before they become major issues. Bi-annually these reports are reviewed with the RSVP Advisory team to provide feedback and strategic direction. The

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RSVP Director also reports monthly to the Division Manager and the Asst. Division Manager for oversight and program review.

Q15. The fiscal controls of the agency are administered by a central unit utilizing an automated financial accounting and reporting system. Program directors make decisions on expenditures based on program objectives while the finance unit monitors expenses according to funding source regulations, accepted principles of accounting, planned expenditure patterns, and availability of cash resources.

The automated financial system provides monthly printouts of revenue and expense statements, general ledgers, trial balances, and balance sheets to program directors and finance staff for review. The finance staff meets with staff monthly to review this information, discuss problems, and formulate action plans on budgetary matters. All financial reports, reviews and contract administration activities are signed off by the VP/Finance subsequent to initial finance unit review, but prior to any final action.

The VP/Operations and the VP/Finance report monthly to the Management Committee of the Board of Directors on all financial activities of the agency. The Board Treasurer makes monthly reports to the Board on financial activities of all programs. Certified public accountants are contracted to perform the agency's single audit and other program audits according to funding source requirements, timetables, and the GECAC Board directives. The audits are reviewed by the Board's Executive Committee, with findings (if applicable) reported to the Board.

Every effort is made by the RSVP Director to secure in-kind resources. MOU negotiations with organizations that serve as an RSVP volunteer station include documented in-kind, such as non-federal supported volunteer meals. In-kind support also comes from state and county funds used to reimburse volunteers for their mileage while delivering meals on wheels. The sponsor agency pursues cash resources from local county funds and other support from the community.

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### Organizational Capability

Q16. GECAC is one of the largest community action agencies in Pennsylvania. In order to effectively run an agency of this size, clearly defined policies/procedures were developed. All personnel procedures have been approved by the board and are recorded in employee handbooks, which are distributed during staff orientation. Additionally, all financial procedures, including purchasing, are detailed in the Financial and Data Processing Services Procedure Manual.

The financial manual is distributed to all staff who work directly with any program budget. This manual also includes the agency's travel policy. Job descriptions clearly define each position's roles. GECAC's organizational chart illustrates these positions' hierarchy. The agency's CEO reports directly to the Board of Directors. Reporting to the CEO are three vice presidents responsible for the main units of the agency: finances, human resources and operations. The division managers of the four operating divisions report to the Vice-President/ Operations. The staff of each division report to the division managers and their assistants. GECAC maintains quality and continuous improvement of its programs through quarterly formative evaluation meetings. These ensure that GECAC administers the most efficient and effective services. As part of an ongoing commitment to excellence in its operations and as a Community Services Block Grant funded agency, GECAC has developed outcomes for all programs using Results Oriented Management Accountability (ROMA).

Q17. One full time RSVP Director and a portion of a clerical position will be assigned to this project. The current RSVP director, Ron Howze has been with the agency since October 1975. He has served as coordinator for a work experience project; Lead Counselor for Workforce Re-entry; and Counselor/Director of Upward Bound. In March 1993, he became RSVP Director. This is a 37.5 hour per-week position as identified in the budget. The director has the authority to administer the program in line with funding source requirements. The RSVP Director reports to the Assistant Division Manager of the Aging Division, who is supervised by the Aging Division Manager.

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The RSVP Director is charged with being the liaison for all aspects of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program with other components of GECAC. He provides staff assistance to the RSVP Advisory Council, consults with the Council on significant plans, local project policies actions, changes and problems affecting RSVP, cooperates with the Advisory Council's annual evaluation of RSVP operational procedures and program activities, and coordinates GECAC's response to recommendations of the Advisory Council. The RSVP Director also plans recruitment, enrollment, orientation and placement of senior volunteers; develops memorandum of understanding and other appropriate documents with volunteer sites; and maintains a cooperative working relationship with a variety of community service organizations and agencies. He plans, develops and implements a continuous program of public relations in cooperation with the Division Manager. Additionally, the RSVP Director is responsible for coordinating formal recognition of RSVP volunteers and those organizations and individuals who have contributed to the support of the RSVP project; maintaining up-to-date financial, staff personnel, project and volunteer records; and adhering to the approved budget while authorizing expenditures for the project, including specific approval of any vouchers for reimbursement submitted by senior volunteers.

The Clerical staff member performs clerical and routine administrative for tasks for both the Foster Grandparent Project and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Project. She acts as clerical staff for both Advisory Councils and assists with record keeping for both internal and external requirements, while safeguarding the confidentiality of all information.

The RSVP Director's position is sustained through RSVP funds, and the clerical position is sustained partly through RSVP and partly through Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) funds.

Q18. Serving Erie since 1965, GECAC has a long history of bringing together people of diverse backgrounds to mobilize community resources. In 1974, GECAC was designated the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for Erie County. In this capacity, GECAC coordinates all services aimed at providing for

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the needs of elderly consumers in the county providing a completely comprehensive service network. Even before GECAC was named the AAA for Erie County in 1974, it was administering RSVP, awarded in April 1973, and the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), first awarded in 1965.

The successful track record is further evidenced by the fact that since 2008 the RSVP program has enrolled 1,912 volunteers who have contributed 363,078 hours to the Erie community. Since inception in 1973, volunteers through the GECAC RSVP project have contributed a combined total of \$7,314,728 in valuable service to entities throughout Erie County Pennsylvania.

Specifically in the Primary Focus Area of Healthy Futures, GECAC RSVP has proven its ability to manage volunteers and measure performance through a long track record of service. Whether it is delivering Meals on Wheels or answering Medicare insurance questions through the Apprise program, GECAC is the recognized name in volunteering to help seniors to age in place, increase access to care, or increase access to nutritious food. During the past year alone, GECAC RSVP had 4 volunteers who distributed information on Medicare health insurance and health care access to 300 clients, 20 volunteers who helped 75 seniors age in place by providing companionship, 65 volunteers who delivered food that allows 676 homebound or older adults to live independently, and 105 volunteers who helped to increase access to nutritious food for an average of 200 individuals each month.

Q19. 1. Tangible assets such as facilities, equipment, supplies:

The Greater Erie Community Action Committee is one of the largest Community Action agencies in Pennsylvania, having been founded in 1965. In the 2011-2012 fiscal year, the agency's total budget surpassed \$30 million. In addition to its 88,000 square foot main facility, GECAC sustains 14 Head Start Centers, 7 Senior Centers and an Adult Education Center in Erie County. All of these facilities are fully staffed and equipped to meet their missions.

2. Governance structure and operations such as internal policies, purchasing procedures, and personnel management: In order to effectively run our agency, clearly defined policies/procedures

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were developed. All personnel procedures have been approved by the board and are recorded in employee handbooks, which are distributed during staff orientation. Additionally, all financial procedures, including purchasing, are detailed in the Financial and Data Processing Services Procedure Manual. This manual is distributed to all staff who work directly with any program budget. This financial manual also includes the agency's travel policy. Job descriptions clearly define each position's roles. GECAC's organizational chart illustrates these positions' hierarchy.

GECAC maintains quality and continuous improvement of its programs through quarterly formative evaluation meetings. These ensure that GECAC administers the most efficient and effective services. As part of an ongoing commitment to excellence in its operations and as a Community Services Block Grant funded agency, GECAC has developed outcomes for all programs using ROMA.

3. Role of a community participation group, such as an RSVP Advisory Council, to ensure input from the community: The advisory board is made up of people who are knowledgeable about human services and social need of the community; competent in the field of community services and volunteerism; capable of helping GECAC meet its administrative and program responsibilities, including fundraising, publicity and programming for impact; knowledgeable of the capabilities of older adults; and reflective of the diverse composition of the demographics of Erie County.

The RSVP director reports to the RSVP advisory board about program design and evaluation. Advisory board members assist in mobilizing community resources through their organizational and personal contacts and through development and coordination of the many varied and diverse volunteer stations. Programs partners are selected based on their ability to provide resources and volunteer experiences that will meet the needs of the local community. Additionally, the RSVP Advisory Board conducts an annual review of the RSVP program and provides recommendations on program improvements to the RSVP Director.

4. Robust financial management systems and past experience managing federal grant funds: Starting

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in 1965 with one staff member and a budget of approximately \$60,000, GECAC has grown to employ over 400 staff members with a budget that has exceeded \$30 million since 2001. During this time GECAC has successfully administered million of dollars for federal grants without audit exception.

The fiscal controls of the agency are administered by a central unit utilizing an automated financial accounting and reporting system. Program directors make decisions on expenditures based on program objectives while the finance unit monitors expenses according to funding source regulations, accepted principles of accounting, planned expenditure patterns, and availability of cash resources.

The automated financial system provides monthly printouts of revenue and expense statements, general ledgers, trial balances, and balance sheets to program directors and finance staff for review. The finance staff meets with staff monthly to review this information, discuss problems, and formulate action plans on budgetary matters. All financial reports, reviews and contract administration activities are signed off by the VP/Finance subsequent to initial finance unit review, but prior to any final action.

The VP/Operations and the VP/Finance report monthly to the Management Committee of the Board of Directors on all financial activities of the agency. The Board Treasurer makes monthly reports to the Board on financial activities of all programs. Certified public accountants are contracted to perform the agency's single audit and other program audits according to funding source requirements, timetables, and the GECAC Board directives. The audits are reviewed by the Board's Executive Committee, with findings (if applicable) reported to the Board.

Q20. GECAC will meet its required non-federal share of cash match. This non-federal share will be sustained by local county funds. In the past several years GECAC RSVP has been supported by local Erie County government funds. These funds regularly come up for refunding and are recognized as vital local support for federal dollars.

**Other**