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Executive Summary

Through this project, the RSVP of Otero, Bent and Crowley counties will have 320 unduplicated volunteers. These volunteers will serve populations that include children, elderly, disabled individuals and veterans in our community.

The primary focus area for RSVP of Otero, Bent and Crowley counties is Healthy Futures. Specific service activities to be undertaken include:

- * Provide transportation to medical appointments for the elderly, veterans, disabled and homebound.
- * Help in food pantries that provide food for the needy.
- * Provide respite care for caregivers who are unable to leave their homes without relief from others.
- * Provide friendship and companionship to those individuals who are elderly, disabled or homebound to provide stimulation and socialization.
- * Deliver meals to the homebound and the elderly.
- * Volunteering in the community garden.

The expected outcome of these activities is to allow individuals to continue to live independently and to help make their daily lives better. There is a saying in one of our senior centers that says "If you rest, you rust!" We do not want any of our community members to rust. These services will be provided in Otero, Bent and Crowley counties in Colorado, in individual homes, food pantries and SAGE kitchens. We will have collaboration with a total of 50 volunteer stations in our tri-county area. Federal funding for RSVP of Otero, Bent and Crowley County is currently \$37,323 and non-federal funding is \$20,518.

Strengthening Communities

We are pleased to we have more than 10% of our unduplicated volunteers in work plans that result in direct outcomes. These include volunteering in the Education and Healthy Futures focus areas. In our primary focus area of Healthy Futures, we will have 170 unduplicated volunteers working.

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This is 53% of our 320 total unduplicated volunteers. One primary reason there is a need for volunteers locally in this area is that over 15% of the population in our tri-county service area is age 65 and above (2010 U.S. census Bureau data).

We will have an additional 85 unduplicated volunteers in two other national focus areas, including Education and Veterans and Military Families. These are areas in which we have not done a tremendous amount of work in the past, but need shows that our tri-county region truly needs more focus in these areas. In education, the grandparent program that was in our school has lost funding and the program has been eliminated. This offers opportunity to our volunteers to get into the schools and make a difference. Fort Lyon VA Medical Center closed several years ago. Now veterans and their families must go to Denver which is about 3 hours away to the closest VA Hospital. Our volunteers will help support the veterans by providing rides to and from medical appointments and confirming veterans' appointments.

With the 85 unduplicated volunteers in Education and Veterans and Military Families, and 165 unduplicated volunteers in the primary focus area, a full 78% of our volunteers will serve in national focus areas, leaving 70 unduplicated volunteers (22%) working in our community priority areas.

At this time, RSVP of Otero, Bent and Crowley counties is not planning to graduate stations. Should there come a time when we need to graduate stations/volunteers, it will be through attrition of those groups not in our national focus areas. Our community priorities will be volunteers in thrift shops, museums, hospital gift shops and nursing homes. It is our feeling that without the volunteers in museums, thrift shops and the hospital gift shops, these non-profit businesses could not remain in operation. Their closure would be a detriment to the economy of the communities in rural Colorado. We also feel that the people who are living in nursing homes need that extra interaction from the outside world to keep them thriving.

RSVP of Otero, Bent and Crowley Counties is sponsored by the Otero County Department of Human

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Services (DHS) and works in cooperation with the agencies in the tri-county area. Agencies include, but are not limited to, the Lower Arkansas Valley Area Agency on Aging, the Otero County Health Department and the Otero County DHS Adult Services.

Our three counties are located along the lower Arkansas River in Southeastern Colorado. The economy is agriculture-based, with farms and ranches spread over the 3,566 square miles of this region. One constant battle in the area is water issues -- from drought conditions to losing rights to expanding urban areas -- which limits our ability to attract new industry. The total population of the tri-county area is 31,153, with a median income of \$30,122 (\$25,000 lower than the state average). The tri-county area has a poverty rate of 19.4% as compared to the state poverty rate of 11.6% and the national rate of 13.0%. (All figures, 2010 U.S. Census Bureau.)

The ethnic breakdown of our service area is: White 58%, Black .04%, Native American 7.9%, Asian .008%, Hispanic 34% and other .05%. Of this population, more than 15% are over the age of 65. RSVP will have Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) signed with 49 different stations that include local hospitals, multiple nursing homes, senior centers, thrift shops, meal centers, medical transportation, faith-based organizations, libraries, museums and schools. Organizations are selected by RSVP for their service to the community and their ability to sustain and meet the needs of a diverse population. As funding decreases and needs rise, a volunteer work force is increasingly crucial.

RSVP of Otero, Bent and Crowley Counties has staff and volunteers who serve on many committees and boards including Otero County Adult Protection, Lower Arkansas Valley Area Agency on Aging, historic preservation, Cub Scout Committee, cultural arts boards, school organizations, churches, medical provider boards and more.

Recruitment and Development

RSVP of Otero, Bent and Crowley Counties actively recruits volunteers 55 years of age and older into volunteer positions that suit their experience and needs. Volunteers are interviewed by RSVP and

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individual organizations to ensure a good fit for the volunteer and the organization where the volunteers serve.

RSVP is seeking new methods of reaching out to agencies and non-profits that could use an expanded volunteer force in our national focus areas as well as possible funding opportunities. We are looking for collaborations that can work toward solutions that meet necessary individual needs and help strengthen the whole community. RSVP will actively inform the communities we serve through newspaper articles, radio interviews and newsletters that are distributed to volunteers, stations and community leaders.

An annual recognition brunch will be used as an opportunity to give our thanks to all of our volunteers, as well as provide an opportunity to disseminate information and inspiration about moving into a new era of volunteerism. The Otero, Bent and Crowley Counties RSVP program has a long history of dedicated volunteers. Over 23 volunteers have over 5,000 lifetime hours served (based on data collected since implementing Volunteer Reporter. Previous data was not available). Two current volunteers have worked in the program for over 25 years. Since 1999, when tracking information in the Volunteer Reporter began, volunteers have amassed over 542,600 hours. Many of our stations have been manned for decades with the same dedicated volunteers who helped start the programs. They have a passion for what they do and they believe in the cause for which they work. When we recruit and place new volunteers, we keep this in mind and spend time with each volunteer to make sure their volunteer experience is a personally rewarding one.

An effective way to communicate with volunteers is newsletters. However, due to costs associated with publishing a newsletter, this service has been eliminated. We want to start sending regular newsletters; however, instead of mailing to the individuals we will send multiple copies to each volunteer station and senior center. We are planning to do a promotion to ask businesses who provide services to seniors to sponsor each edition.

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Training for each RSVP volunteer occurs in the station where they work.

Currently our volunteer pool is comprised of mostly Caucasians, although all ethnicities are encouraged and welcome to be part of our RSVP. At our recent community Early Settler's Day RSVP had an information booth. The purpose of the booth was to let everyone know that if they are 55 or older and want to make a difference, we have opportunities for them.

Our project director has volunteered to be part of the local Veteran's Day celebration in order to meet some of our local heroes, in hopes of convincing them to become part of RSVP. We plan to contact the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans and the American Legion to recruit volunteers as well.

Inspiration Field is a local non-profit organization that primarily serves developmentally disabled individuals. We are discussing having some of their clients who are able and are 55 and over become volunteers. It is one of our goals to have a truly diverse volunteer crew.

Program Management

STAFF: The RSVP office of Otero, Bent and Crowley Counties is operated by a paid director. The program director, Dee Quick, is supervised and evaluated by the Otero County Department of Human Services (DHS) Adult Services Division Director, Janine Pearce-Vasquez. Janine also manages the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) which funds some of the projects that utilize RSVP volunteers. The Adult Services Division is under the direction of Donna Rohde, Director of Otero County DHS. The RSVP director makes periodic reports to the DHS Director and quarterly reports to the Otero County Commissioners. RSVP is provided use of the DHS Adult Services receptionist and guidance from the entire staff (including Adult Services caseworkers).

BUDGET: Financial management for the program is under the direction of the DHS program assistant, Donna Ross. She tracks all income and expenditures and provides reports monthly or more often when needed. Project spending is discussed with the sponsors and adjustments are made when

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necessary. Otero County contributes to the medical transportation demonstration program for volunteers from Otero. Funding for this service in Crowley and Bent counties is not currently available.

PROGRAM DOCUMENTATION: RSVP uses software, Volunteer Reporter 6, to track volunteer information, placements, hours, donations and years of service. Paper files are also kept for each volunteer, station, donor and State and Federal reports. The previous RSVP program directors have started an operations manual which will be completed by the new director.

IN-KIND: Otero County provides office space, telephones, a computer and printer as well as tech support, internet connections and email services. They also provide management supervision and other services such as payroll and health benefits. SAGE provides in-kind meals for volunteers. RSVP volunteers provide materials and man hours to provide food for non-profit events or quilts for non-profit raffles or organizations that give quilts away to families in need. Businesses also volunteer goods, meeting space and their time and expertise to RSVP events, especially for the annual RSVP appreciation brunch.

STATION RECRUITMENT: The program continues to recruit support stations that address national focus areas. The RSVP director has spent individual time with station managers to ascertain their needs and how best to maximize their services by using RSVP volunteers. Management of volunteer stations is done by personal visits as well as interim telephone contacts. We will have memorandums of understanding with all stations and keep records on our Volunteer data base. The Advisory Council has been empowered to make informal visits to stations in their areas and report back to the monthly meetings. The Council's expertise and knowledge has been instrumental in moving RSVP toward more impacting projects.

PUBLICITY/OUTREACH: Public service announcements have been placed in area newspapers to recruit and remind the community we are still here and making a difference. Interviews on the local

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radio station will take place to talk about RSVP, the importance of volunteering and how to become a volunteer. Funding is tight, however, we are going to produce RSVP newsletters and deliver them to volunteer stations and senior centers to save on postage. This will still allow us to reach our target audience. As the next generation starts retiring printed collateral material will diminish and outreach will be done electronically through email, web sites and social media.

DONATIONS: Donations are recorded by the RSVP office in the Volunteer Reporter 6 database and thank you notes are sent. The money or checks are given directly to the budget staff and she records the amount into the proper RSVP budget category and then deposited into the Otero County bank account. Management of volunteer stations is done by personal visits as well as interim telephone contacts. We will have memorandums of understanding with all stations and keep records on our Volunteer data base.

The project director will meet with each station that provides outcome services for planning of information sharing that is vital to our organization. We will gather this information in a timely manner and report it accordingly.

Organizational Capability

Recognizing that the role and focus of volunteers as well as the funding of RSVP is changing, RSVP, its sponsoring organization and the RSVP Advisory Council are exploring new means in which to engage volunteers and increase capacity. For this reason, RSVP is rededicating the way it delivers service to achieve better results. We are developing partnerships and collaborations that maximize RSVP's ability to deliver project completion quickly and efficiently.

Governance and Leadership: RSVP's Advisory Council and sponsoring agency (Otero County DHS) supervisors are engaged and representative, with defined governance practices. Otero County and the Advisory Council effectively oversee policies, programs, and operations including review of goals, financial status, and program director performance. RSVP has an accomplished history of recruiting,

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developing capable staff and volunteer resources. At this time, RSVP leadership is responding to changing community needs and budget realities.

Mission, Vision, and Strategy: RSVP has an important community mission and a clear understanding of its identity. Currently, RSVP staff and Advisory Council are actively involved in regular, results-oriented, strategic, thinking and planning that aligns strategies with the mission and with building organizational capacity. The planning process involves stakeholders (volunteers, non-profits, government agencies and community-at-large) in an ongoing dialogue in an effort to ensure that RSVP's mission and programs are valuable to the community and constituency it serves.

Program Delivery and Impact: The organization operates programs that demonstrate tangible outcomes appropriate with the resources invested. Historically, RSVP programs throughout the country and in Otero, Bent and Crowley Counties are high quality and well regarded. Most recently, RSVP has been evaluating results to realign goals. RSVP assesses internal and external factors (the economy, aging populations, and community leadership) that affect achievement of these goals.

Strategic Relationships: RSVP is a respected and active participant and leader in the community, and has strong connections with the community. It is building collaborations and partnerships that significantly advance its goals and expands its influence.

Resource Development: RSVP successfully secures support from a variety of sources to ensure that its services are directed and sufficient for the mission and goals. The resource development plan is aligned with the mission, long-term goals, and strategic direction. RSVP, its staff and Council have high visibility with key stakeholders, and links clear, strategic messages to its resource development efforts.

Internal Operations and Management: RSVP has efficient and effective operations, and strong management support systems. Financial operations are responsibly managed and reflect sound accounting principles. It utilizes information effectively for organizational and project management

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purposes. Supervision of the many aspects of the program occur daily the by Project Director. This is accomplished by meeting with stations, volunteers, recording hours and in-kind donations. Fiscal matters are reported by the bookkeeping and copied to program director. Internal policies are in place.

RSVP is taking an active role in community growth and preservation while focusing in the areas of Education; Veterans and Military Families; and Healthy Futures in addition to maintaining community priorities. We will reach out to all community members to take an active part in the development of their towns and counties. We will continue to staff and support our current stations and volunteers as well as keep our commitment to our communities. We will work with community service organizations and others to help fund our program. We will also work with our RSVP Advisory Council to identify additional funding sources to help sustain and expand our program.

Other

n/a

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

n/a