

PART I - FACE SHEET

| APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE | | 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): 10/18/12 | 3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE: | STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER: 13SR143762 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2b. APPLICATION ID: 13SR143762 | 4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY: 10/18/12 | FEDERAL IDENTIFIER: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. APPLICATION INFORMATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LEGAL NAME: South Florida State College DUNS NUMBER: 081373763 | NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Kris Schmidt | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 600 W College Dr Avon Park FL 33825 - 9356 County: Highlands | TELEPHONE NUMBER: (863) 784-7189 FAX NUMBER: (863) 784-7200 INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: rsvp@southflorida.edu | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 591218159 | 7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Higher Education Organization - State Controlled 7b. 4-year college Vocational/Technical College | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 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: Corporation for National and Community Service | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER: 94.002 10b. TITLE: Retired and Senior Volunteer Program | 11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Retired and Senior Volunteer Program | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): FLORIDA Opportunity #8 Highlands County - a rural region of central Florida, including the cities of Sebring, Avon Park, and Lake Placid | 11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY): | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 04/01/13 END DATE: 03/31/16 | 14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="FL 016"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="FL 016"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 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;"> <tr><td style="width: 15%;">a. FEDERAL</td><td style="text-align: right;">\$ 44,534.00</td></tr> <tr><td>b. APPLICANT</td><td style="text-align: right;">\$ 19,896.00</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;">\$ 19,896.00</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;">\$ 64,430.00</td></tr> </table> | a. FEDERAL | \$ 44,534.00 | b. APPLICANT | \$ 19,896.00 | c. STATE | \$ 0.00 | d. LOCAL | \$ 19,896.00 | e. OTHER | \$ 0.00 | f. PROGRAM INCOME | \$ 0.00 | g. TOTAL | \$ 64,430.00 | 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 | \$ 44,534.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| b. APPLICANT | \$ 19,896.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| c. STATE | \$ 0.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| d. LOCAL | \$ 19,896.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| e. OTHER | \$ 0.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| f. PROGRAM INCOME | \$ 0.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| g. TOTAL | \$ 64,430.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 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: Manuel Cortazal | b. TITLE: | c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (863) 784-7233 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: | | e. DATE SIGNED: 10/18/12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Narratives

Executive Summary

The number of unduplicated RSVP volunteers: 303

Populations to be served: Individuals seeking emergency food assistance, elderly, veterans, and K-6 children.

The primary focus area: Healthy Futures

The volunteer service activities: For Healthy Futures- food collection, distribution, and delivery. Other areas: Aging in place- companionship and transportation; Disaster Preparedness-outreach and preparing disaster kits. Veterans-assisting with DOL/VETS. Education-community-based mentoring, assisting in the classroom. Other Community Needs: Assisting local nonprofit service agencies.

The locations of these service activities: Highlands County, Florida.

The expected results or outcomes of the volunteers' services: Primary Focus Area: 1500 individuals reporting increased food security.

The number of stations: 30

The federal funding level: \$44,534

The non-federal funding level: \$19,896

Strengthening Communities

Narratives

A Snapshot of Our Community

Since 1965, South Florida State College has been the only college serving the residents of the 2,290 square mile-region known as Florida's Heartland. SFSC not only offers classes, the college serves as a venue for cultural events, a recreational center, and the base for a number of community-oriented programs. The college has been the home for the local RSVP program for five years.

The Heartland is a mainly rural area. Here, nestled among groves, ranches, and scrub brush, lies Highlands County (Pop. 98,000), where agriculture, hospitality-oriented businesses, and low-paying service jobs dominate the local economy.

Today, the Heartland, with Highlands County at its center, remains mired in economic distress brought on by the recession, with the hobbled housing market, moribund construction sector, and stagnant services industries dragging down commercial activity, leading to increasing layoffs. The region is a frequent target of hurricanes, tornadoes, and flooding, often forcing families from their homes and jobs, with the result that they find themselves in need of emergency assistance.

The effects of the recession linger and pose a hunger risk to Highlands residents who continue to lose jobs, placing them in an emergency situation because other job opportunities are scarce. Hard data, as recent as October 2012, show that the number Food Stamp (SNAP) recipients moves higher, even though economists say the recession bottomed out three years ago.

Looking toward the future, until businesses stop laying off employees in Highlands County, thousands of residents who suddenly find themselves in a crisis because of unemployment, or because of frequent

Narratives

disasters, will turn to local food banks to meet their nutritional needs.

A Deepening Crisis: People Vulnerable to Hunger

While some states and communities have bounced back from the Great Recession of 2007, Highlands County residents continue to dig out from under the accumulation of foreclosures, shuttered businesses, and worthless retirement portfolios. Breadwinners in Highlands County keep losing their jobs and remain susceptible to the economic hazards of disasters.

Before the recession, 26 million Americans received SNAP benefits. Today, that number has grown to more than 46 million, or one in seven Americans. Here in Highlands County, the numbers are more distressing: One in five of our residents rely on SNAP.

Data from the State of Florida's Public Assistance Caseload Report show that 6,879 Highlands County residents received SNAP benefits in June of 2007, just as economic indicators started pointing south. As the economy spiraled downward and job losses mounted, the number of recipients has grown each year. As of October 2012, the caseload report shows that 19,709 Highlands residents rely on the federal nutrition program to put food on the table.

A local food bank--Manna Ministries--reports that its monthly caseload has doubled since the recession took hold. The faith-based organization's executive director says it served 232 families in 2007. The number has now reached 540, and increases by 20% during the end-of-year holiday season.

Narratives

Families and individuals grappling with an emergency-like a sudden layoff or losing a home to a storm-often experience hunger for the first time. Hunger is not just a longing for food-it has consequences beyond an unsatisfied desire. An inability to maintain a balanced diet is associated with reduced immunity, increased susceptibility to disease, impaired physical and mental development, and reduced productivity, according to the experts at the World Health Organization.

The severity of the problem can be measured in many ways, including the effect on children. More than 70% of the Highland's County's K-12 students are eligible for free/reduced lunch, according to data from the State of Florida's Education Information & Accountability Service. Before Highlands County residents started losing their jobs, only 58% of the county's students were eligible for the service.

The effects of hunger on children have profound consequences that may not be seen for years. The free/reduced lunch data confirm that school-aged children are among those hardest hit by Florida's economic downturn. In an analysis of the effects of poor nutrition on children, researchers found that children who went hungry at least once in their lives were 2½ times more likely to have poor overall health 10 to 15 years later, compared with those who never had to go without food. The lead researcher, Sharon Kirkpatrick, of the National Institutes of Health said, "Our research shows that hunger and food insecurity are really damaging in terms of children's life chances."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which studies hunger in America, found that poverty was the chief reason so many Americans face food insecurity. The fundamental cause of sudden poverty is the unexpected loss of income usually connected with a job.

Narratives

The poverty that follows on the heels of a sudden job loss, then, ought to explain why so many Highlands County residents rely on nutritional support programs. Data from U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimate show the poverty rate for Highlands County is 20.7%. For children 3 years and older, the rate rises to 27.8% - nearly one in three children live in poverty.

Faculty and staff at SFSC know the picture well. Requests for free consulting services from small businesses have kept pace with the sour economy, said David Noel, a certified business associate with the Small Business Development Center at SFSC. More than ever, our students rely on financial aid to pay for yet another tuition increase and escalating textbook prices.

The ongoing job losses in our county have been driven by the general contraction in local business activity, especially in construction and real estate. According to the Census Bureau's County Business Patterns, commercial activity in Highlands County continues to shrink in every sector except health care. Earlier this year, economists at Wells Fargo Bank who studied Florida's economy said, "the state still has quite a way to go to recover the losses from the Great Recession."

The high rate of poverty in our county is unlikely to show an improvement in the near future. Unemployment in Highlands County, according to State of Florida's Department of Economic Opportunity, remains above the national average. Currently, the rate is 9.7%, and would be higher had not more residents withdrew from the local labor force, according to the data.

In order to cope with the urgent need to feed themselves after an unexpected layoff, individuals will need emergency food assistance until they become eligible for SNAP, to supplement SNAP, or until they find a new job. Our food banks fill that need.

Narratives

The local food banks not only assist residents who experience an emergency need resulting from unexpected unemployment. The threat of natural disasters looms over Florida and is a frequent cause of economic distress that results in food insecurity. The state is a frequent target of hurricanes and other tropical cyclones that cause enormous damage to homes through wind and flooding.

A not well-known fact is that Florida ranks first in the nation in the number of tornadoes. Also, Florida has the most thunderstorms per square mile of any state in the nation. Together these weather phenomena pose a constant threat to life and property in Florida. SFSC, for example, serves as the major evacuation center for the northern section of the county, necessitating that its staff be well versed in disaster preparedness. Earlier this year, for example, a tornado tore through the southern section of the county destroying homes and leaving a family without a mother. These families turn to our food banks when disaster strikes.

An Unmet Need

While SNAP (Food Stamps) provides a means for individuals and families facing an emergency to buy nutritious food, serving as a safety net for those who are "food insecure," not every hungry person accesses the program. A recent survey found that 26.4% of area food bank clients had not applied for SNAP benefits because they thought they were not eligible or eligible for only a low benefit amount. The survey, conducted by the Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida, also found that another 15% did not apply for SNAP because they didn't understand its purpose or because they thought others would need the benefits more.

Narratives

Even when residents receive SNAP benefits, they still turn to local food banks for assistance. The same survey found that, on average, SNAP eligibility ended after 3 weeks. What's more, 32% of central Florida food bank clients were already receiving SNAP benefits but still sought assistance to supplement their benefits. "The results of this study are the most sobering I've seen in my 18 years of involvement," said Dave Krepcho, the president of Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida, who oversaw the survey.

These survey results, along with others, confirm that many SNAP recipients turn to food banks to meet unmet nutritional needs. Why? The average daily SNAP benefit is approximately \$4 per person per day. Experts at the Food Research and Action Center report that Food Stamp participants find they have to make difficult food shopping choices, and often realize how difficult it is to avoid hunger, afford nutritious foods, and stay healthy by relying solely on SNAP.

Because of the inadequacy of SNAP benefits, and the continuing economic distress, the demand for assistance at Highlands County's food banks remains high. And the local food banks face difficulties meeting the needs. One food bank, Manna Ministries, reports having a hard time purchasing discount groceries from the food bank system, according to Marlene Christiansen, the organization's executive director. "We have had to spend a large amount on retail groceries to continue serving our clients," she said.

In the end, she said, they always manage to get enough food. But they don't always get enough volunteers. The food banks rely on volunteers to sort foods, discard damaged or outdated items, box foods, stock shelves and put perishable foods into a refrigerator. Other volunteers are needed for duties like bookkeeping, filing, and cleaning.

Narratives

The food banks have some paid staff, but they can't do it all, said Mary Foy, the vice chair of the Heartland Food Reservoir, another local food bank. On one day in September, Foy said she had five volunteers doing much of that week's work.

"I need at least that many more," she said. "You see, it's hard to say how many you really need because it depends how many hours they're willing to work. I need at least two people here all day every day. If we had a pool of 20 volunteers we could schedule them very easily without overtaxing anybody." Fifteen more volunteers would be an ideal situation, she said.

Managing The Solution

Highlands County food banks have the systems, processes, and structures in place to acquire sufficient quantities of food to meet local demand. As Ms. Foy said, they need volunteers. They need volunteers to accept, sort, package, store, and distribute food for Highlands County's hungry residents.

So, the primary focus of South Florida State College's RSVP will center on addressing the Corporation for National and Community Service's strategic plan of securing the Healthy Future of our neighbors by increasing access to nutritious foods for those individuals and families facing emergency situations like sudden job loss or disasters.

As noted above, Highland County's food banks already have a steady stream of clients who, because of lingering effects of the recession, routinely seek assistance. What is needed is to have the infrastructure in place to meet emergency demand that often comes in the wake of a natural disaster like a

Narratives

hurricane or tornado. Or, the erratic spikes in demand as new clients, many who have suddenly lost a job or other source of income, seek emergency food assistance.

The Plan

Highlands County residents who experience an emergency requiring nutritional assistance can turn to one of three food banks or the dozens of food pantries they serve. Earlier, we made note that our food banks need volunteers to meet the demand for services. So, in order to answer that need, we propose to maintain and expand the existing volunteer stations at the three food banks: Manna Ministries, the Salvation Army, and the Heartland Food Reservoir.

Our local food banks already have connections and relationships in place that ensure access to foodstuffs. Each organization has been in operation for several years-one for over two decades-and each is well managed. The critical need of each food bank comes from the lack of human resources needed to maintain essential staffing levels.

We aim to place 62 volunteers among three stations, one station at each of the three food banks. Together these volunteers represent 20% of SFSC's effort to address our primary focus on Healthy Futures.

Volunteers at these three stations will assist the food banks in the following core tasks:

- * Sorting food
- * Discarding spoiled food

Narratives

- * Boxing food
- * Stocking shelves
- * Storing food for refrigeration
- * Distributing food
- * Delivering food to the homebound

The combined effort of the volunteers in completing these tasks will ensure that the three food banks will be able to meet the demand of individuals and families seeking emergency food assistance. As Ms. Foy of Heartland Reservoir said: We need volunteers to get the food she has to those who need it for their tables. Our plan gives her those volunteers.

We anticipate that the chief outcome of these volunteer efforts will be 1500 individuals reporting increased food security. Increased food security comes when individuals seeking foodstuffs can visit a food bank and leave with items they need to satisfy their hunger. If our food banks have the human resources they need to keep the food they have flowing into hands of our residents needing emergency assistance, then we have met our outcome's goal.

In line with our primary focus on Healthy Futures, we also aim to assist our residents improve their access to health care by deploying volunteers who provide direct care, information and referral to affordable care. Census data show that 16.4% of our residents lack health insurance. At the same time, the Florida Department of Health has identified Highlands County as an area where too many people rank in the "least favorable" category for rates of diabetes, hypertension, and high blood cholesterol. Many folks in our service area need assistance accessing affordable health care. We help them meet

Narratives

this need through volunteers providing direct care, referrals, and assistance accessing affordable care.

Also, Highlands County is home to a large number of retired individuals, many of whom have caregivers who need respite care. In fact, one third of our residents are 65 and older, according to the latest census. Findings from one report show that 70% of caregivers experience work-related difficulties trying to fulfill their dual roles as worker and caregiver. We address their needs through volunteer stations that offer transportation assistance and meal delivery so that caregivers get a break.

Apart from our primary focus on Healthy Futures, our community has other needs. Far too many of our schoolchildren come against headwinds that impede their progress in school. This past year, six of our eight elementary schools dropped in their rankings because of poor student performance. We propose to place volunteers in several elementary schools so that they have access to supportive tutoring that will lead to academic success.

Our county is home to 17,000 veterans who served their country in times of war and peace. Because of the high rate of unemployment, 20/7% of our veterans live in poverty. We propose establishing a volunteer station at the local D.O.L./VETS office. These volunteers will help the local employment counselor with clerical duties, thus freeing up his time to work more intensely with veterans. Also, the volunteers will assist veterans with resume writing, completing job applications, and other job readiness tasks.

The natural disasters described earlier, not only affect families by causing food insecurity, but storms, fire, and flooding can result in damage to property and loss of life. So, we plan for volunteers to assist our residents prepare for disasters by teaching them how to assemble disaster kits.

Narratives

We have other community needs and address them in a final work plan. Mainly, many of our nonprofit agencies' budgets are stretched thin, and paying for dedicated staff for specific tasks places far too great a burden on them. So, we propose to maintain volunteer stations at 16 service organizations (e.g., Red Cross, Redlands Migrant Association, NuHope Elder Services) so that they can continue to accomplish their mission of serving our community.

In sum, we have a program in place that offers our seniors who volunteer an enriching experience while meeting the pressing needs of our community.

Recruitment and Development

The success of a volunteer program depends on developing good matches. SFSC endeavors to match volunteers with stations and in positions that complement their interest and skills. The Project Director identifies, recruits, and places volunteers in assignments that are right for them and the organization in which they serve. A variety of station placements are offered and training--to the extent it is possible- is customized.

Each volunteer station is evaluated by multiple on-site visits from the SFSC RSVP Project Director. These site visits include several face-to-face meetings with the organization's management, program staff, and persons served.

These efforts generate a written agreement governing the scope of the volunteers' work, expectations of the organization itself, reporting requirements, and agreement on outcomes. The agreement includes an identification of the assigned staff member responsible for day-to-day oversight of volunteers.

Narratives

The majority of our volunteers are 65 years and older. A natural outcome given that one-third of our county's population is older than 65. Still, there remains a sizeable pool of younger volunteers from which the program can recruit. The latest census estimate shows that Highlands County is home to 12,615 residents between 55 and 64. The SFSC RSVP project will continue to focus on recruitment among these residents in order to match potential volunteers with stations where they can utilize their fund of skills. Because it is an educational institution, SFSC is uniquely suited to tap into this pool of volunteers. Research indicates that volunteering with educational organizations is the second most common venue for boomers, a finding SFSC hopes to capitalize on during this year.

Because we are popular destination for retirees, our local senior population brings a wide range of experiences and skills to SFSC's RSVP placements. While a number of volunteers are nurses who will help us meet our primary focus of Healthy Futures, the far greater number of them is not, and they can be deployed to meet our other needs, i.e., tutoring, assisting veterans, and outreach for disaster preparedness.

To boost recruitment, and highlight SFSC's RSVP, the Project Director, Ms. Schmidt, started local observation of two national days of service: One on 9/11 and the other on the federal holiday that observes Martin Luther King Day. On 9/11, the focus is on disaster preparedness. The event is open to the public and revolves around getting the public to think about preparing for disasters. RSVP volunteers participate and showcase the program to the public with the intent of recruiting volunteers. Similarly, on MLK Day, the focus is on serving others through volunteering.

Keeping abreast of the latest recruitment strategies is a goal of the Project Director. SFSC's RSVP

Narratives

Project Director is an active member of Florida Association for Volunteer Resource Management. She uses the organization's resources and networking opportunities to keep current with the latest techniques and strategies for volunteer recruitment and management.

Maintaining a cadre of committed volunteers is critical to program success. SFSC strengthens volunteer retention by offering benefits to RSVP participants. Volunteers have full access to the same professional development opportunities as SFSC employees. RSVP volunteers can attend workshops on computer skills training and service-related business skills. The workshops are advertised at the volunteer stations and via e-mail blast from project staff. Furthermore, by virtue of their relationship with the College's RSVP program, volunteers have access to the school's library and its extensive array of Web-based educational resources that includes access to ebooks, academic journals, and databases. Volunteers can attend SFSC-sponsored personal enrichment events and learn of other volunteer activities.

Recognizing volunteers for their dedication remains as an important objective for SFSC. An annual recognition event is held for volunteers. More than 200 volunteers are expected to attend the 2013 event scheduled for National Volunteer Week. The banquet includes a seated meal, entertainment and awards to recognize outstanding volunteers. National Volunteer Week will offer an opportunity for the Project Director to highlight the program's successes to local media outlets.

SFSC believes that keeping volunteers and the public informed builds a better program. The RSVP Project Director and volunteers have ongoing speaking engagements at local service clubs and civic groups, and homeowner's associations as well as health and senior fairs. The Project Director also attends potential recruiting events, such as the Senior Expo, with RSVP volunteers.

Narratives

Volunteer stations provide support services and site-specific training. A number of community agencies, such as the Alan Jay Automotive Network, the Palms of Sebring, and NuHope Elder Care Services have provided refreshments for volunteers at events throughout the county.

Program Management

The project falls under the administrative oversight of SFSC's Division of Academic Supports. The project-specific details will be monitored by the Project Director, Mrs. Kris Schmidt. Mrs. Schmidt has managed the SFSC RSVP project since 2007, when it was first administered by SFSC. As part of her duties, Mrs. Schmidt will oversee the more than 300 volunteers at 30 volunteer stations, as well as secure community support and partnerships to improve and expand the dynamic nature of this RSVP project. Each work plan will be assessed throughout the year, measured against outputs and outcomes. In support of the project, SFSC works diligently to secure additional funding and resources. For example, the College secured a \$5,000 grant through the Southwest Florida Water Management District to assist seniors in their water conservation practices.

The Project Director guarantees that each station has a written agreement governing volunteer orientation to the station and in-service training, resources required to perform assignment, including reasonable accommodation, supervision while on assignment, and safety of RSVP volunteers assigned to program.

Mrs. Schmidt appoints coordinators for each station and conducts site visits to the stations regularly throughout the year. She also works closely with leadership volunteers to expand and support recruitment efforts, adjust volunteer stations to meet dynamic community needs, and provide volunteer-specific support as needed. Volunteer job descriptions are posted at each station to assist

Narratives

coordinators and volunteers with matching workers to site needs. Throughout the year Mrs. Schmidt conducts outcome-based assessments of volunteer stations and their associated volunteers.

Feedback from the volunteers and the personnel at the stations is collected and evaluated for future training needs, the quality of the volunteer experience, and on SFSC RSVP services in general.

Ms. Schmidt maintains a close working relationship with the CNCS state program office with a view toward ensuring that SFSC RSVP effort is in compliance with program requirements and strategic priorities. She also regularly networks with other RSVP programs around the state in order to stay current with best practices and new ideas.

Project resources, both financial and in-kind, will be managed by the South Florida State College Controller's office, according to Florida Statutes, and established accounting standards. Efficient and effective use of available program resources will be assured. SFSC has well-established procedures governing the administration of all restricted funds. Grants accountants with specific experience in administering federal awards are tasked with monitoring all financial transactions associated with the College's RSVP effort. A robust financial reporting system is in place that generates detailed accounting reports available for management and auditing purposes. Reimbursement for travel and other program personnel expenses will follow existing College guidelines.

The SFSC's Controller's operations are audited annually by the Auditor General of the State of Florida. The most recent audit (February 2012) from the Florida Auditor General notes: "Our audit disclosed that the College's basic financial statements were presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with prescribed financial reporting standards. Our audit did not identify any deficiencies

Narratives

in internal control over financial reporting that we consider to be material weaknesses. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States." A complete copy of the report will be provided to CNCS and is accessible as a public record via the Web at: http://www.myflorida.com/audgen/pages/pdf_files/2012-087.pdf

Organizational Capability

Historically, Highlands County has been a popular destination for retirees. Residents over the age of 65 comprise one third of our population. Statewide, the average is 18%. These residents are intimately engaged with the college. As a result, South Florida State College has extensive experience with programs involving retired senior citizens.

For example, the College's popular annual Artist and Matinee series, as well the SFSC Museum of Florida Art and Culture, each has volunteer seniors who form extensive cadres of ushers, hosts/hostesses, and docents. SFSC has long viewed the large senior population as a key constituency. SFSC and its senior neighbors have forged a bond that is an integral part of the life of the College. The RSVP effort builds upon this strong foundation of service to seniors.

Another mainstay of SFSC's commitment to local seniors is its "Lifetime Learners Institute" which provides short-term educational opportunities and social activities for senior interested in expanding their horizons. Course offerings include lectures, discussions, and presentations.

The College's track record of working with seniors extends from education and cultural enrichment to physical activity. The College organizes the annual Heartland Senior Games to promote physical fitness, good health, and a competitive spirit among seniors who live active lifestyles and to inspire

Narratives

those who hope to become more active. The games include: Basketball, Billiards, Bowling, Cycling, Golf, Horseshoes, Sand Volleyball, Shuffleboard, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis, Track and Field.

The RSVP Project Director, Mrs. Kris Schmidt, serves as the chief staff person for the project and developing and implementing all aspects of the program. She is also responsible for ensuring project quality, oversight, and evaluation to maximize significant positive affect on the College's surrounding community. Mrs. Schmidt has led the College's RSVP effort for five years. In that time she has honed her skills as expert program manager, earning high performance evaluations for her superior achievement in implementing RSVP in Highlands County.

Ms. Schmidt continues to craft new ideas. She initiated a dialogue with a local school to establish a community garden program that will expand volunteer opportunities while offering fresh produce to local food banks.

She is an alumna of "Leadership Highlands," a 10-month program that familiarizes participants with the infrastructure, agencies, and economic enterprises throughout Highlands County; exposes participants to a range of community needs; identifies the resources available to meet those needs; and encourages civic participation and volunteer involvement in the community. Ms. Schmidt currently is enrolled in management coursework offered through SFSC as means to further enhance her skills.

SFSC's RSVP project continues its efforts to secure grant funds to implement an age-appropriate fitness program, including the use of Wii, Wii fit, and Zumba Gold exercises along with health workshops that will provide services to underserved seniors promoting independent living. The

Narratives

initiative will train RSVP volunteers how to use the Wii-based exercises and assign them to group quarters where they will lead groups of seniors in the exercise program.

Mrs. Schmidt's dedication and outstanding performance led to her being named SFSC's employee of the year in 2010. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Florida Association for Volunteer Resource Management as its secretary.

The Program Director receives close supervision and monitoring. Ms. Schmidt's efforts are overseen by the director of the SFSC adult education programs, Dr. Michael McLeod, Dean of Academic Supports. He leads many of the College's external programs and is himself intimately and extensively involved with a host of community groups. Dr. Michael McLeod has 20 years of experience in managing community education projects. He knows the community well and is well-positioned to monitor our RSVP's progress.

On-going project evaluation is one of the most important responsibilities of the Project Director. Mrs. Schmidt conducts both qualitative and quantitative monitoring of the activities and objectives to assure program success.

Program success depends on a data driven approach to management. Data on volunteer inputs and outputs are captured and analyzed by the project director. Project data are entered into a database (Volunteer Reporter) maintained by the project director. This allows for archiving of data and ready reporting on project performance, such as the number of volunteer hours in a given month. For example, feedback from the volunteers and the personnel at the workstations is collected and evaluated for future training needs and to determine the quality of the volunteer experience.

Narratives

The College, because of its extensive campus infrastructure, can provide adequate program resources. The RSVP program director is provided with dedicated office space, student interns for office assistance, access to all of the College's information technology systems, use of the library's research capabilities, and access to networking opportunities with faculty, administrators, and SFSC's community partners. All of these combine to ensure that our RSVP effort has at its ready all that is need to ensure success.

Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A