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Executive Summary

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Bristol Community Organization, Inc. Bristol RSVP

2013-2015

The BCO Bristol RSVP program has operated for over 25 years. BCO Bristol RSVP will work to meet the goals of the Corporation for National Service Strategic Plan: Increase the impact of national service on community needs and to strengthen national service so that participants find satisfaction, meaning and opportunity and sustain a capable, responsive and accountable organization.

BCO Bristol RSVP will work with 293 unduplicated volunteers who will serve in 57 volunteer stations with a primary focus on Healthy Futures for community members who are disabled, aging or indigent. Currently, BCO Bristol RSVP has 102 volunteers who work in the Healthy Futures focus area. RSVP staff will work to develop the appropriate data instruments to document the outputs for improving access to care; aging in place; and access to healthy, sufficient food supply. Volunteers will work with hospitals, will deliver meals, will assist with therapeutic horseback riding, and will work in emergency food sites such as soup kitchens as well as helping out at food pantries. BCO Bristol RSVP volunteers will serve in four communities - Bristol, Burlington, Plainville and Plymouth CT - that are demographically and geographically diverse. The towns are urban, suburban and rural. It is expected that the BCO Bristol RSVP volunteers will increase the impact of their efforts using the new focus on performance standards and this increased impact will maximize the volunteer experience. The federal funding level for the BCO Bristol RSVP program is: \$73,418. And, the non-federal funding level is: \$31,743. Total: \$105,161.

Strengthening Communities

Part II Section B: Strengthening Communities: For over twenty-five years, Bristol Community Organization, Inc. (BCO) has served as the grantee for the Bristol area RSVP program. BCO is

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applying for the Competition Funding because the services that BCO will provide to individuals, non-profit organizations and area communities are compatible with the Corporation for National and Community Service mission of improving lives, strengthening communities and fostering civic participation. The BCO mission is to eliminate and/or alleviate the causes and effects of poverty.

BCO Bristol RSVP is proposing to continue to serve the communities of Bristol, Burlington, Plainville and Plymouth which are located in west central Connecticut. Bristol, Burlington and Plainville are located in Hartford County and Plymouth is located in Litchfield County. The geographic area served by Bristol RSVP is economically and culturally diverse including an urban area (Bristol), a wealthy suburb (Burlington), a blue collar suburb (Plainville), and a rural community (Plymouth).

This year, BCO Bristol RSVP has conducted extensive analysis of community needs, volunteer preferences, and current volunteer stations and projects in order to align BCO Bristol RSVP goals, activities and performance measures with those of the Corporation. For a year, in 2011, BCO's planning department worked with professors and students from two area colleges to conduct an area wide needs assessment. Students and staff conducted research in the following areas:

- * Geographic: Five towns served by BCO
- * Demographic: age, income, ethnicity, economic status
- * Housing: Home ownership/occupancy/renters
- * Food: Free and reduced lunches; emergency food sites
- * Health and Safety: crime statistics, health coverage statistics
- * Neighborhoods and Community: interviews with city leaders; meetings attended
- * Senior Citizens
- * Low-income families
- * Residents with disabilities
- * Employment and Training

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* Education

There were several needs that were identified in the BCO Community Assessment and there were additional needs discovered in 2012 that align with the focus areas of the Corporation and with the activities of the BCO Bristol RSVP program.

This analysis, along with the program analysis led to conclusions that helped BCO to determine the proposed focus areas for 2013 -- 2015 for the BCO Bristol RSVP Program. For purposes of this grant application, the status and number of residents who are 55 and over is critical information. The needs assessment data indicates the following:

"Housing, medical care and costs, transportation, nutrition needs, fitness and social interaction of residents who are over age 55 will be the critical issues facing towns." Transportation is available for seniors in three of the four towns (Burlington is the exception). Yet, for the past two years, transportation funding for Dial A Ride services has been reduced. Seniors have adequate housing and medical care, but the funding for those programs may be threatened.

The biggest needs will result from the increase in the number of seniors and the capacity of towns to provide the services that will be needed in the future. There will be a great opportunity to consolidate, reform and improve senior services as the baby boomer generation ages. According to the 2000 annual census, the number of residents who were between the ages of 45-54 was two to three times higher than those aged 55-59. Ten years have passed and while the new numbers are not yet available for each town, it is clear that the 55-59 age group in 2012 will be at least double that of 2000.

Town	Bristol	Burlington	Plainville	Plymouth
Ages 45-54 (2000 census)	8,087	1,503	2,614	1,647
Ages 55-59 (2000 census)	2,981	528	959	620

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The need for an RSVP program in this area of Connecticut is evident and the issues facing an aging population such as nutrition needs, fitness and social interaction along with the need to remain independent are critical to area residents. There is no other organization in the Greater Bristol Area that can serve residents over 55 years of age and strengthen their communities as well as BCO Bristol RSVP. As the population ages, healthy residents over age 55 will be able to help nonprofit programs that serve elderly residents and assist elderly residents with aging in place.

There is a new index being discussed by local health officials and health care providers which uses statistics such as age at death, teen pregnancies, and reporting of diseases in combination with geographical location and economic status. The Community Health Index will become more wide spread with the advances of the health care reform law toward a more preventive health care delivery system. There is a continued interest of both community leaders and volunteers in the focus area of Healthy Futures. Thus, based on the data analysis of the Greater Bristol area, the requests for assistance by area nonprofits and the volunteers who want to serve in a particular focus area; BCO Bristol RSVP has selected Healthy Futures as the Primary Focus Area for our program. Of 293 unduplicated volunteers, BCO RSVP has 87 volunteers who serve in areas defined by Healthy Futures whose work meets the Healthy Futures performance measures.

Education: There is a continued need for tutoring and mentoring in all of the communities served by BCO Bristol RSVP. There are two indicators that were part of the BCO community assessment -- Students eligible for free and reduced lunch and students receiving special education services. The indicators were researched by the Connecticut Department of Education for each town. Again, BCO used a data analysis, the requests for assistance, and the interests of the volunteers to determine the selection of Education as a focus area for volunteers in the area of community priorities. Below are some of the data used to determine the education focus:

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Town Year Percent in Town Percent in State

Plainville Students eligible for free and reduced lunch 2009-2010	25%	
	32%	
Plainville Students receiving special education 2009-2010	13%	11%

Currently, there are volunteers and schools in Plainville with a need for tutors/mentors.

In Bristol, a similar need exists among low income and special needs children:

Town Need Indicator Year Percent in Town Percent in State

Bristol Students eligible for free and reduced lunches 2009-2010	39%	32%
Bristol Students receiving special education services 2009-2010	13%	11%

In Bristol, there is a need for tutors/mentors, particularly in the elementary schools. As both tables indicate, both Bristol and Plainville have more students receiving special education services than the State of Connecticut as a whole. Bristol has more students eligible for free and reduced lunch than the State of Connecticut as a whole, while Plainville also has a high number of students eligible for free and reduced lunches. The BCO Community Assessment makes a direct correlation between economic status and educational achievement and the fact that both towns (Bristol, nearly one third) and (Plainville, nearly one quarter) have children who live in families with incomes below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level is a key finding for the BCO Bristol RSVP.

Veterans: The Bristol Community Assessment neglected to look at the needs of veterans. This community need was initiated by members of the community in Bristol who came to the RSVP

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program and to BCO's Executive Director to ask for services and volunteers for newly begun programs. In May, 2012, Bristol became one of only five communities in the USA to open an Army Strong Office. At the same time, a group formed a new nonprofit to hold an event at a local amusement/water park for the children of veterans and active duty military families. In the winter of 2012, BCO convened a meeting of local veteran leaders to discuss the needs of veterans and active members of the military including the CT National Guard. Again, census data has not been refined to the local level, yet. Army Strong officials in Bristol said that the generally accepted figure for determining the number of veterans is 10% of the total population. For example, the population in Bristol is approximately 60,525 as of the 2011 census Quick Facts data. That would indicate that there are 6,000 veterans living in Bristol, CT.

Another source, the website of the Bristol, CT Veterans Council indicates that there are 5,000 veterans living in Bristol, CT. Thus, BCO can safely conclude that there are between 5,000 and 6,000 veterans. Active military and National Guard participant figures are not available.

BCO Bristol RSVP will be working to begin an active veteran focus in the program. A member of the veterans groups will be recruited to serve on the RSVP Advisory Board. Ten to fifteen new volunteers will be recruited to work with the Army Strong office and/or work to assist veterans who may need help at the Newington, CT or the West Haven, CT VA hospitals. BCO RSVP began this work in the early spring, 2012 at the request of the Army Strong office. Over the summer, volunteers developed a plan to gather suits, ties, sports jackets, business dresses and accessories that might be worn by veterans going to job interviews. In addition, volunteers assisted at an amusement park where a special day was scheduled for the children of parents who were actively serving in the military.

For over twenty-five years, BCO Bristol RSVP has demonstrated the organizational capacity to manage the RSVP program successfully. Because of the established role of BCO RSVP Bristol in the community, the primary focus area of Healthy Futures has volunteers who meet the performance

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measures for the focus area. The need to assist communities with aging in place, with alleviating hunger, and with assisting with access and education about health care services are being met with current BCO Bristol RSVP volunteers. During the next three years, BCO Bristol RSVP will be able to evaluate measure and analyze the delivery of services and the outcomes of the performance measures. Over the three year period, BCO RSVP Bristol will work with volunteers and with nonprofit stations to ensure that the needs of the community are served by the program.

Through work at local food pantries, emergency food sites and the delivery of meals to elderly residents who choose to age in place and remain independent, BCO Bristol RSVP volunteers will work in warehouses, will drive meals to residents, will prepare and serve meals at soup kitchens leading to a healthier life for the residents we serve. BCO Bristol RSVP is well known as the organization that provides trained, skilled volunteers to nonprofits in four communities. The Chamber of Commerce, the United Way, the hospital, the public schools, the museums and the social service agencies including the new Army Strong veterans program all look to BCO Bristol RSVP to meet their needs for volunteer services. BCO RSVP Bristol adds to the social fabric of the community and certainly strengthens each of the communities it serves

Recruitment and Development

Part II. Section C: Recruitment and Development. Anyone who has ever worked as a volunteer knows what the requirements are: being treated with respect, being thanked and having a rewarding experience that makes one feel needed and/or satisfied. For BCO Bristol RSVP volunteers that could mean anything from gathering with a small group in the afternoon to help the Chamber of Commerce of West Central Connecticut to mail out a newsletter or hold a leadership position on the Board of Directors of a nonprofit agency.

To begin, BCO Bristol RSVP recruits volunteers using several methods. At least three to four times a year there is an article in the local newspapers (one daily and one weekly) about an event at BCO or

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other nonprofit that includes BCO RSVP Bristol. Because BCO Bristol RSVP is so well known in the surrounding area, there is a strong word of mouth -- friend to friend -- recruiting network. The Director of the program attends meetings, serves on Boards, works closely with the Senior Citizen Center Directors, and attends fairs and events where she recruits volunteers.

For example, this past May, the City of Bristol opened the Army Strong Office with a downtown celebration. Nonprofits were invited to sponsor tables that informed residents and veterans about services available. BCO Bristol RSVP staff was there, recruiting and giving out information about the programs and social services available to veterans. The veterans groups were interested in building connections with the BCO RSVP Bristol program. The BCO RSVP Director convened a meeting with local veterans to discuss immediate needs and future relationships. During the next three years, BCO RSVP Bristol will continue to strengthen connections with veterans groups to enlist volunteers to help active duty military families as well as younger veterans. In addition, the Director will recruit a veteran to sit on the BCO RSVP Bristol Advisory Committee.

As with most communities in America, Bristol and Plainville are seeing an increase in Latino and Hispanic residents. Another goal for the next three years is to work with the Spanish speaking community through the churches to enlist volunteers. Volunteers who have a disability or who are aging out of their current volunteer work are offered accommodations.

Once a volunteer approaches the Director of the program or comes to the BCO office offering to volunteer, BCO Bristol RSVP has developed a protocol for engaging the prospective volunteer. The Director has a keen awareness of the individuality of each volunteer. She explains that there are no requirements to become an RSVP volunteer. BCO Bristol RSVP has volunteers who enjoy solitary tasks requiring little interaction with staff or other volunteers. And, there are volunteers who make new friends and form new social connections because they enjoy working in a group. Some volunteers are simply looking for a meaningful place to go every day or every few days. Many find

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themselves watching too much TV. Each volunteer is offered an array of activities after an individual private interview with the Director. Many widows and widowers come to RSVP as the first step to rebuilding their lives after a loss. Volunteers are constantly assured that whatever amount of time they choose to give will be greatly appreciated and acknowledged. Some volunteers want easy, relaxing tasks; others are looking to challenge their knowledge base with new experiences.

For example, a volunteer who loved having the freedom to travel in summer, but found Connecticut winters confining chose to volunteer only in the winter. She knew she needed to get out of the house. Eventually, the volunteer was hired as a part time employee for several winters to work with the BCO Energy Assistance Program. When she turned 80, she decided that she needed to slow down and gave up the job! Other volunteers love the idea of working in a museum or a school. Tutoring is one of the most rewarding of all volunteer jobs. After the initial interview and orientation to the program, a volunteer will select one of the options offered. The Director of the program works with Executive Directors of programs in all four towns to ensure that new volunteers are trained in the position they select. Volunteers always use time sheets to record hours of service. Now, the new performance measures will require a reporting of outcomes and each volunteer and the nonprofit director of any station will be trained to understand the new performance measure, the new outputs necessary to complete the outcomes of the performance measures and the instrument used to measure the outcomes. For example, a person who volunteers at the Army Strong Center will be schooled in what social services may be available to active military families and/or to veterans. The volunteer will learn about performance measures and the Army Strong staff will work with the Director of BCO RSVP Bristol to ensure that instruments are in place to track performance measures. The volunteers will be placed in volunteer assignments that are suited to their skills and talents.

Volunteers are always appreciated and welcomed at RSVP stations. Most are thanked every time they volunteer and many are commended by the nonprofits they serve. BCO Bristol RSVP organizes a

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volunteer recognition luncheon each May. Volunteers who have accumulated twenty hours of volunteer time over a twelve month period are invited to attend. The Director of the program solicits baskets, gift certificates and other items which are given to volunteers through a number drawing. In addition, volunteers who have served five, ten, twenty, or twenty five years are recognized. There is often music and the Mayor of Bristol welcomes everyone and thanks them for their service. Photos of BCO Bristol RSVP volunteers are put up on the BCO website in recognition of the service of volunteers and many volunteers end up in photographs in the local newspapers.

Program Management

Part II -- Section D Program Management: In order to ensure that the BCO Bristol RSVP program is managing both stations and volunteers to the letter and intent of the law, BCO uses an analysis of the federal code of regulations, Chapter XXV Part 2553.51 through Part 2553.92. These regulations detail the responsibilities of the terms of service for an RSVP volunteer and delineate under what circumstances an RSVP volunteer may be terminated. In addition, there are sections of the regulations regarding when a sponsor may serve as a volunteer station as well as the responsibilities of a volunteer stations. Legal coverage for sponsors and volunteers is covered in the regulations sections. For example, "A public agency, secular or faith-based private non-profit organization, or proprietary health care organization that accepts the responsibility for assignment and supervision of RSVP volunteers in health, education, social service of related settings such as multi-purpose centers, home health care agencies or similar establishments. Each volunteer station must be a licensed or otherwise certified, when required, by the appropriate state or local government. Private homes are NOT volunteer stations." BCO Bristol RSVP always develops a memorandum of agreement regarding volunteer positions. Lastly, BCO Bristol RSVP will always comply with the civil rights and opportunities laws of the United States and of Connecticut regarding non-discrimination.

For the next three years, BCO Bristol RSVP will work with the communities we serve to continue to

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analyze community needs. BCO updates the Community Assessment every year and for the past 18 months, the BCO Director of Planning and the Director of the Bristol RSVP program have worked together to analyze the current program and service delivery model. The Director of the program contacted over twenty volunteer stations and discussed their current needs. With advances in technology and very little growth in the public sector and/or the non-profit sector, some stations decided that volunteers were no longer needed. BCO Bristol RSVP is in contact with most of our volunteers. The program operates under the belief that volunteerism is always changing, volunteers may want to change their focus and it is the responsibility of the program to facilitate change. The biggest change will be to develop a strong volunteer effort with veterans and active military families. The greater Bristol area is well known for supporting veterans. With the Army Strong office as the initial station, and with a VA Hospital thirty minutes away, BCO Bristol RSVP will encourage new and existing volunteers to help out with the veteran's initiative. Other volunteers will be encouraged to participate in capacity building projects and activities.

In order to assure that National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs are measured and collected, the Director of the program will work with the State Corporation for National Service staff, other RSVP Directors, and the BCO Executive Director and the Director of Planning to formulate a system and structure for gathering data. We will begin with the primary focus area -- Healthy Futures and then focus on the Education data. As a part of the process, BCO Bristol RSVP will consider the privacy of individual clients, will work with volunteer station directors and will follow CNS guidelines. It will be the responsibility of the Director of the program and the part-time staff person to ensure that outcomes are measured and collected.

The Director of the program will work with the Director of Finance and the Executive Director regarding all financial management. For example, the Volunteer Recognition Luncheon is organized by the Director of the program. She selects the place, time, choice of menu, recognition prizes and

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invited guests. The Executive Director approves the plan and the Finance Director makes all payments for expenses incurred. All expenses are documented by receipts, recorded and kept on file. If there is a conference, or if there is an event such as a Senior Fair, the Director of Program will always get approval for expenditures from the Executive Director and actual payment from the Director of Finance. All in kind services are documented and submitted to the Finance Department. The Director of Finance and the Executive Director monitor all expenditures. The Director of the program has no spending authority. The Director of Planning and Development writes all three grants that fund the BCO Bristol RSVP program, the Director of Finance submits all financial reports and the Director of the program submits all the reporting data.

Organizational Capability

Part II -- Section E. Organizational Capability.

The BCO infrastructure has been in place for forty years. The Executive Director and the Director of Finance have worked at the agency for over twenty five years. The Director of BCO Bristol RSVP has served for over twenty years. In short, BCO has demonstrated the organizational capacity to successfully manage an RSVP program for over twenty years. The Corporation for National Service funding is matched with a secured funding stream from the State of Connecticut and from the United Way of West Central Connecticut. BCO Bristol RSVP has met the reporting requirements for each of the funding sources -- both program reporting and financial reporting.

On a day to day basis, the Assistant part time clerical position is responsible for data collection and data entry. The Assistant part time clerical position reports directly to the Director of the program. In addition to data collection and data entry, any flyers announcing events, any birthday cards to volunteers, newsletters, the Assistant part time clerical completes other tasks as directed. This position is currently funded at 15 hours per week. The federal funding for the program was reduced by 20% in 2011 resulting in a cutback of hours in the assistant position and a cut back in health benefits for the

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Director of the program.

The Director of the program is responsible for recruiting and enlisting volunteers, placing volunteers at stations, working with stations to get memoranda of agreement and to determine volunteer work plans, working with the communities by attending community events, sitting on committees, attending fairs and other events and working with the RSVP Advisory Council and the RSVP CNS Connecticut staff. In addition, the Director of the program attends regularly scheduled meetings of the Directors of RSVP programs from throughout Connecticut. Currently, Patricia Malone is the Director of the program and Fay Tolassi is the Assistant Part time Clerical.

BCO Bristol RSVP has experience with the primary focus area of Healthy Futures. When preparing the work plans this summer, the Director of Planning and the Director of the program matched performance measures with existing placements. Most BCO Bristol RSVP volunteers were already doing meaningful work. There are no new placements or stations in the primary focus area. During the next three years, it is expected that some of the volunteer stations and/or volunteer placements will change. In addition, BCO Bristol RSVP has experience in the Education focus area. For many years, RSVP volunteers have acted as tutors or mentors in several elementary and middle schools. BCO manages two federally funded programs that require performance measurement, data collection and outcomes reporting: the Community Services Block Grant operates under ROMA (Results Oriented Management and Accountability) National Performance Indicators and the Head Start Program operates under stringent performance standards. BCO's Executive Director, Finance Director and Director of Planning and Development all have extensive experience with these performance measure programs.

As a member of the CT Association for Community Action, BCO is required by contract to assess the following organizational areas once a year: governance, planning and development, organizational programming, information technology, finance, and human resources. BCO uses an assessment

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instrument developed by the Northeast Institute for Quality Community Action (NIQCA). The instrument is approved by the Connecticut Department of Social Services. Once every three years, NIQCA sends a team of peer reviewers to conduct an assessment of the agency functions. The instrument is based on best practices that are nationally accepted as good management practices for non-profits. BCO has not ever had any deficiencies and scores at or above best practices in most areas. The Information Technology area is close to best practice and is not in any deficiency. This assessment requires updated bylaws, a documentation of minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors with signed participation by members of the BCO Board of Directors. Best practices also require program policies for each program run by the agency; a financial procedure manual that cover credit card policies, purchasing policies and procedures; an annual independent audit; up to date human resources policies; confidentiality and ethics agreements signed by both staff and members of the Board of Directors. All policies, procedures, board minutes, and by laws are kept in notebooks available for monitoring teams.

The Bristol RSVP Advisory Council is an active group with several community members. An RSVP volunteer who is disabled is the Chair of the Advisory Council and also sits on the BCO Board of Directors as a voting member. This structure ensures that RSVP issues, programming and financial management are monitored by both the RSVP Advisory Council and the BCO Board of Directors. In addition, the BCO Board of Directors has an attorney, who is the President of the Board and a board member who works in the financial services industry.

Bristol Community Organization, Inc. is a private, nonprofit 501 (c) 3 agency that owns the two buildings that house BCO programs. BCO Bristol RSVP is housed in the primary administration building at 55 South Street, Bristol, CT. The building is handicapped accessible including having handicapped rest rooms. The BCO Bristol RSVP staff has access to all BCO computers, to the network server, to the phone system, to copiers and fax machines. The RSVP staff is an integral part of the

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BCO organization.

As previously indicated, BCO Bristol RSVP has earned two ongoing funding streams to meet the non-federal share required by the Corporation for National Service. The State of Connecticut, Department of Social Services provides some funding to RSVP programs statewide. Locally, the United Way of West Central Connecticut awarded a three year grant to the BCO Bristol RSVP. In addition, the work of the Director of Planning and Development on grant writing and on assisting with the conceptual development of the program is an in kind contribution to the program.

Other

Bristol Community Organization, Inc. will use the same account, routing number and bank account that is currently used for all CNS deposits and payments. Because this data is already on file, BCO is NOT filling out a new form 1199A because we do not want a duplicate account set up in the CNS system. All contacts are the same. If CNS needs anything further, BCO, Inc will comply with any and all requests.

Financial documents have been mailed to address listed in NOFA instructions.

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

NOT Applicable