



# Narratives

## Executive Summary

RSVP will provide volunteers age 55 and older with opportunities to use their life skills and experiences to meet community needs in the areas of Education, Healthy Futures, Capacity Building, Financial Literacy, and a number of other Community Priorities. Sponsored by Elder Services, Inc. (ESI), this grant will provide funding for 435 RSVP volunteers to provide services to 21 schools, non-profit organizations, and community groups in four counties: Johnson, Des Moines, Iowa, and Muscatine. RSVP's Primary Focus is Education with 180 unduplicated volunteers (43%) participating in four complementary programs aimed at improving the academic performance and educational outcomes of children from kindergarten through junior high school. The school districts in the RSVP service area have faced a number of new challenges in recent years. In addition to more students and crowded classrooms, schools have seen an increase in the number of children receiving free or reduced lunch, more families living at or near poverty, and more students for whom English is a second language. At the end of the 12-month performance period, students will show improvement in all areas of literacy including reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

RSVP volunteers will also serve older and homebound Iowans, families experiencing food insecurity, and others through a number of community-based non-profit organizations. The CNCS federal investment of \$71,281 will be supplemented by funds from Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service (\$31,173), New Freedom Fund (\$45,000), the Iowa Insurance Division (\$1,200) and donations from individuals and corporations (\$910). Elder Services, Inc. will contribute office space, phone and internet service, printing, postage, meeting room usage, and staff supervision.

## Strengthening Communities

RSVP will provide volunteers age 55 and older with opportunities to use their life skills and experiences to meet community needs in the areas of Education, Healthy Futures, Capacity Building, Financial Literacy, and a number of other Community Priorities. Sponsored by Elder Services, Inc. (ESI), this

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grant will provide funding for 420 RSVP volunteers to provide services to 21 schools, non-profit organizations, and community groups in four counties: Johnson, Des Moines, Iowa, and Muscatine. This service area includes the cities of Iowa City, Coralville, Oxford, North Liberty, Burlington, West Liberty, and North English in addition to many rural communities. The combined population of all four counties served by RSVP is 183,945, and while there are many similarities among these communities, residents of each county have their own specific strengths and challenges.

Johnson County is home to 130,800 residents, 87% of whom are Caucasian, 5% are Hispanic or Latino, 5% are African American, and 5% are Asian. Iowa City is the county seat of Johnson County with a population of 67,860 and is home to the University of Iowa, one of the state's largest employers. Ranked by Forbes as the second best small metro city for business and careers, Iowa City also leads the list of cities on the Milken Institute's Best Cities for Successful Aging. Fifteen percent of Iowa City residents are age 65 and over and new retirees often return to this community for its arts and leisure opportunities, accessible housing, excellent health care, and optimal volunteer opportunities.

Des Moines County has a population of 40,320; 92% are Caucasian, 5% are African American, and 3% are Hispanic or Latino. Eighteen percent of Des Moines County residents are age 65 or older and 14% are at or below poverty level. In southeast Iowa, Burlington and West Burlington are the two largest cities in Des Moines County with a combined population of 25,660 and a median household income of \$39,120. Historically, Burlington's economy has been rooted in transportation and manufacturing, but over the past several years, several large companies have left the area. As of March 2012, Burlington's rate of unemployment was 7.6% compared to the state average of 5.4%.

Iowa County has a population of 16,350; 98% are Caucasian and 2% are Hispanic or Latino. Seventeen percent of Iowa County residents are age 65 or older and 9% are at or below the poverty level. Iowa County is mostly rural, with an average of only 28 residents per square mile and classified

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as "isolated rural" by the United States Department of Agriculture. The RSVP program in Iowa County is based in North English, one of the county's seven incorporated cities.

Muscatine County has a population of 42,475; 96% are Caucasian and 16% are Hispanic or Latino.

Fourteen percent of Muscatine County residents are age 65 or older and 14% are at or below the

poverty level. The RSVP program in Muscatine County is based in West Liberty, which has a population of 3,700, 52% of whom are Hispanic or Latino. West Liberty has seen a 12% increase in

population over the past 10 years, due in part to the city's main employer, West Liberty Foods. The

West Liberty School district has one of the largest minority populations in the state of Iowa and of the school district's 1,200 students, over 46% are receiving free or reduced lunch.

RSVP has been sponsored by ESI since 1990 and is one of the most well-known agencies in eastern

Iowa serving as the "go-to" resource to connect residents age 55 and older with fulfilling volunteer

opportunities. Populations served by RSVP volunteers include elementary and junior high school students, older and homebound elders, and families in poverty and experiencing food insecurity.

RSVP's Primary Focus is Education with 180 unduplicated volunteers (43%) participating in four complementary programs aimed at improving the academic performance and educational outcomes

of children from kindergarten through junior high school.

The school districts in the RSVP service area have faced a number of new challenges in recent years.

In addition to more students and crowded classrooms, schools have seen an increase in the number of children receiving free or reduced lunch, more families living at or near poverty, and more students

for whom English is a second language. With the exception of the 1990s, the percentage of Iowa

children in poverty has grown faster than the national rate in every decade since 1970. As a group,

children raised in poor and low-income families hear far fewer words during their formative years and have less than a 50% chance of being ready for school by age 5.

In order to meet these challenges, RSVP will implement four specific programs to help children of all

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ages improve their school outcomes: Rock & Read Buddies, Intergenerational Literacy Program, SPEAK UP!, and Reading Enhancement through South East Tutoring (RESET).

When children are poor readers at the end of first grade, they have as high as an 88% probability that they will remain below grade level as poor readers by the end of 4th grade. According to recent research, one in six children who do not read at grade level by 3rd grade do not graduate from high school and students who are both poor and not proficient in reading are six times more likely to drop out of school.

According to the 2009 State of Iowa Schools Report, a significant number of 4th grade students within the RSVP service area were reading below grade level; 21% in Iowa City, 24% in Burlington, and over 35% in West Liberty. This is compared to a state average of 20%. Educators have requested RSVP volunteers to read one-on-one with students to help them become fluent and proficient in reading. This is a critical milestone for students to reach by 3rd grade, which is when students start reading to learn and must increase their comprehension skills.

Ninety-five unduplicated volunteers (total 120) will assist students with reading through the Rock & Read Buddies program. RSVP volunteers will attend a fall training sponsored by the districts' reading and resource teachers to learn reading techniques for working with students in Kindergarten through 4th grade. Volunteers will be assigned by location and skill level to 23 elementary schools in four school districts: Iowa City Community School District, West Liberty Schools, Clear Creek Oxford and Burlington School District. Teachers may request RSVP volunteers through their principal or Title 1 teacher to read with young children learning to read or with older, struggling readers either one-on-one or in small groups. Activities will include reinforcing reading techniques, identifying the main ideas related to the readings, and reading comprehension. All activities are consistently linked to social development and the growth of an appreciation for books during formative elementary years. Each volunteer will work weekly with an average of three to six students throughout the academic

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year. During the 2011 school year, 120 volunteers worked with 248 students in 97 different classrooms in the service area. At the end of last school year 78% of students reported that they like to read better at home. Teachers report that many children do not own books in their home and that learning to love books is a critical component to their overall education. Rock & Read Buddies volunteers provide attention for the child, model a love of books, and reinforce beliefs that children can succeed despite environmental and educational challenges.

Kirkwood and Lucas Elementary schools serve 5th grade students who have multiple challenges, including autism, behavioral and emotional issues, are in foster care, or have physical health concerns. Sixty-one percent of Kirkwood students and 46% of Lucas students are eligible for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program. According to a 2007 North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension report, learning communication skills helps young people navigate their world and prepare for entry into the workforce and for the civic and family roles they will assume as young adults. Recent research has shown that anxiety related to public speaking is strongly correlated with an overall lack of confidence and poor self-esteem and could lead to a higher prevalence of dropping out of school. In contrast, learning communication skills in elementary or middle school can help students prepare academically for junior high and high school. According to the school district's curriculum specialist, Pam Ehly, there are no programs in the Iowa City Community School District that teach and promote public speaking. Fifth- grade teachers identify this grade level as an ideal age to learn these skills and to receive guidance in self-expression and communication. Speaking is one of the four basic communication skills along with reading, writing and listening, all of which are taught as part of the SPEAK UP! curriculum.

SPEAK UP! is an Inter-generational public speaking course conducted by teams of RSVP volunteers. Students will learn how to write and deliver their first formal speech while practicing the important speech skills of eye contact, voice projection and a firm handshake. At the end of each eight-week

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session, students will deliver two basic speeches, an impromptu and a three-minute speech, while receiving confidence-building feedback from the RSVP volunteers after each presentation. If time allows for a second semester, students will compose and present position speeches showing two sides of an issue and defending their final position on that topic.

Ten volunteers will work with 200 students in at least four different classrooms. Through pre- and post-tests, students will show improvement in knowledge and practice of public speaking skills and confidence. Later in the semester, students will be selected to present their speeches to Kiwanis and Rotary groups to demonstrate their poise and ability to address adults and to receive their applause which inspires confidence and motivation.

Elementary school teachers within the RSVP service area report that their students have very few opportunities to develop letter-writing skills, especially with the increased popularity of cell phones and texting. Educators can enhance a child's skills dramatically by encouraging the writing habit in childhood. Basic to the concept of holistic teaching are the tenants that literacy instruction needs to be relevant, serve a real function, and be meaningful to the language learner. One activity that meets these requirements for literacy growth is writing and receiving personal letters.

Elementary teachers want to develop reading and writing skills in students through correspondence by connecting their students with caring adults in the community who support their education. Starting as a Service Learning project, this Intergenerational Literacy Program has continued in partnership with RSVP and has become a model for other school districts in the service area.

Eighty elementary students will be matched with 36 unduplicated (50 total) RSVP volunteers to exchange letters twice a month throughout the school year to learn letter writing skills, spelling and practicing English. Volunteers will receive and respond to letters from students and also visit the classroom twice a year for students demonstrate their reading skills in person. Program activities not only contribute to students' literacy skills, but also promote intergenerational discussions on a number

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of topics relating to hobbies, school days, childhood games, transportation to school, and life in Iowa has changed over the years.

In the Iowa City Community School District, students in the Practical Language Arts and Learning Support classes at South East Junior High School are reading far below their grade levels. The school chooses students for this program who have multiple academic needs, come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, have specific learning disabilities or have exceptional needs that place them on at-risk status for these classes. For example, 7th grade students in these classes began the 2011-2012 academic year with an average reading level of 1.3 grades which is less than second grade level. 8th grade students in these classes began the year only slightly better, with an average reading level of 1.7 grades. Administrative personnel report that these students often display negative behaviors due to their academic challenges. School district educators and counseling staff do not have the resources to provide the one-on-one intense tutoring needed to help these students advance to their age-appropriate reading level in order to continue in school.

Twenty-two unduplicated (25 total) RSVP volunteers will tutor 7th and 8th grade students in the Practical Language Arts classes and Learning Support classes through the Reading Enhancement through South East Tutoring (RESET) program at South East Junior High School in Iowa City. The South East resource teacher develops individual lesson plans and matches RSVP volunteers with students for one-on-one tutoring sessions. Tutor-student activities will include, but are not be limited to work using specific reading curricula, homework assistance, test preparation, practicing time management and general organizational and study skills. The resource teacher who manages this program is an excellent volunteer manager and develops curricula to make each session productive. Last year, RSVP volunteers recorded over 1,500 volunteer hours in this one classroom. Student progress will be measured through an assessment called PROBES which is administered by the teacher every other week to monitor progress and adapt learning tools and tutoring activities. During

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the 2011-2012 school year data showed that among 26 students, 23% improved 2 grade levels, 42% improved 3 grade levels, 27% improved 4 grade levels and 8% improved 5 or more grade levels.

The National Performance Measure output that will be addressed by the RSVP programs within the Primary Focus Area of Education is ED2: Number of students that completed participation in CNCS-supported K-12 education programs. The National Performance Measure outcome that will be addressed by these activities is ED5: Number of students with improved academic performance in literacy and/or math.

### **Recruitment and Development**

The RSVP program in Johnson, Iowa, Des Moines, and Muscatine counties has been sponsored by Elder Service, Inc. (ESI) since 1990. Quality volunteer experiences can only occur through strong partnerships with organizations that value the work of RSVP volunteers and the skills and experience they bring. RSVP has worked tirelessly to develop community partnerships and meaningful volunteer opportunities that lead to improved outcomes for those served. RSVP is committed to providing experiences that allow volunteers to build new skills, develop leadership potential, reflect on the meaning of service to the community, and enhance the quality of their own lives.

According to a report by the Iowa Policy Project, between the years 1995 and 2000, 10,000 adults over the age of 65 returned to the state of Iowa. Recent research has shown that baby boomers have a somewhat different view of both retirement and volunteering than previous generations. This generation will may retire earlier, stay healthier, and be more physically active. They exhibit more independence and will seek volunteer opportunities as a means to remain engaged and pursue individual interests. In order to appeal to this generation, RSVP will actively recruit volunteers in a manner that allows them to maintain their professional and social contacts, meet community needs, and feel both valued and challenged. RSVP will offer flexibility in both scheduling and in the types of volunteer opportunities available. Staff members will keep an open line of communication with

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volunteers to receive feedback and suggestions in order to ensure a positive volunteer experience.

RSVP will recruit volunteers through the RSVP website, social media, and presentations to community groups such as Rotary International, Pilot Club, PEO, and church groups. RSVP will engage volunteers with a variety of skills, physical abilities, time commitments and experience.

The first step in matching a volunteer with a fulfilling assignment is to have a well-defined orientation process. Upon enrollment, each new volunteer will meet one-on-one with RSVP staff in order to understand their purpose for volunteering, the population they would most like to serve and how they would like to use their experience to address specific community needs. Background checks will be conducted and processed. Job descriptions and position-specific expectations will be discussed in order to promote a rewarding, long-term volunteer experience.

Volunteers also will also receive an orientation packet that includes the RSVP handbook, information on supplemental insurance, and specifics about their station and job description. The manual includes standards for RSVP volunteers including limitations on religious and political activities and avoiding the displacement of paid workers. Depending on their placement, volunteers will be informed that they may receive mileage reimbursement, meals or other thank you favors as recognition from the station but no fee for service.

Once a volunteer opportunity is selected, a member of the RSVP staff will contact the station volunteer coordinator to set up an appointment for orientation. The volunteer will meet with the station coordinator to review the position in-depth and receive on-site training. For some positions, a new volunteer may work with an existing volunteer for orientation. Other positions may have additional requirements such as the ability to commit to an entire semester or school year or a clean driving record. Within the first month, a member of the RSVP staff will follow up with both the volunteer and the station coordinator to ensure that a good match was made.

Each volunteer station will receive a copy of the Station Manual after the Memorandum of

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Understanding (MOU) has been completed. Job descriptions outline the days and times volunteers are expected, the orientation and/or training to be provided and any benefits the volunteer may receive. Those participating in programs such as Seniors Against Investment Fraud (SAIF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or SPEAK UP! will receive more involved station-specific training. Volunteers participating in RSVP's school-based programs will receive periodic trainings to keep them updated on new curricula, learning strategies, and children's literature. Informal networking opportunities will be organized for volunteers to get together and share their experiences with each other.

Volunteer retention and recognition are integral to any program and are top priorities for RSVP. RSVP will hold annual recognition events in each county where program successes will be celebrated and awards for years of service will be presented. RSVP will continue to hold an open house during Senior Corps week to reach out to potential volunteers. In past years, many stations have held their own recognition events to show their appreciation for RSVP volunteers. For examples, the Iowa City Police Department has installed a permanent plaque in its lobby to honor both present and past RSVP volunteers.

Each year, RSVP will collect and report data on the number of volunteer hours, the impact of volunteer activities, the populations served, and agency partnerships developed. This annual report will reflect the importance of program outputs and outcomes and will be made available to all stations, volunteers, elected officials and community members to report the impact of this CNCS program. RSVP staff will also survey volunteers annually to assess their satisfaction with their volunteer experience. Making sure that volunteers understand the number of lives they have impacted is a component of RSVP appreciation and recognition. Volunteers need to know how their service meets critical community needs for students, elders, and families. RSVP has high success and retention rates, and some volunteers have been with the program for over 15 years. Several volunteers

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have reported that meeting new people and feeling appreciated has helped them deal with the loss of a spouse or family member and that volunteering has added more meaning to their lives. Many satisfied and motivated RSVP members even recruit friends and spouses to become RSVP volunteers themselves.

In 1993, local businessman, George Matheson and his company, Coldwell Banker Real Estate Professionals, created Bucks for Books to recognize the contribution Rock & Read Buddies make to the Iowa City School District. Books are chosen by school librarians and donated to elementary school libraries, with each book including a name plaque that honors an RSVP volunteer. Over the past 19 years, this program has donated \$18,000 and over 1100 books to local schools in recognition of RSVP. The successes of RSVP and its volunteers have been featured predominantly in the local media and over the past several years, RSVP volunteers and staff have received numerous awards and accolades. RSVP volunteers also have the opportunity to work with other national service program volunteers on Days of Service when volunteers of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities serve together.

A special effort to engage veterans and military families will be made around the times of year when these groups are recognized including Fourth of July, Memorial Day, and Veteran's Day.

Presentations will be made to veterans' groups and an effort will be made to track veterans serving by adding a question to the RSVP registration form where a volunteer may self-identify as a veteran or military family member.

### **Program Management**

RSVP has an established and efficient system in place to manage volunteer stations and assignments in compliance with data reporting requirements. RSVP completes a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for each station, working with volunteer coordinators to develop job descriptions and identify measurable outputs and outcomes. MOUs assure compliance with federal regulations and program guidelines and are reviewed and updated every two years. The basic provisions of the MOU are:

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### **A. RSVP will:**

- 1. Provide station staff with orientation to RSVP policies and procedures prior to placement of volunteers.**
- 2. Accept specific volunteer requests and promote the volunteers needs of the station.**
- 3. Interview, recruit, and refer appropriate volunteers for specific assignments.**
- 4. Instruct RSVP volunteers and/or agency staff in proper use of monthly timesheets, reimbursement guidance, and program procedures.**
- 5. Review volunteer assignments periodically to assure satisfaction of both the volunteer and station.**
- 6. Furnish accident, personal liability, and excess automobile liability insurance for RSVP volunteers in accordance with RSVP policy.**
- 7. Provide transportation and meal reimbursement for RSVP volunteers in accordance with RSVP policy.**
- 8. Provide station staff with RSVP timesheets, volunteer request forms, and other documents as needed.**

### **B. The Volunteer Station will:**

- 1. Request and engage volunteers in accordance with federal guidelines.**
- 2. Request volunteers in a timely manner, providing all pertinent information regarding specific assignments, allowing adequate time for volunteer recruitment.**
- 3. Make the final decision on the acceptance of a volunteer.**
- 4. Provide a detailed description, orientation, training, and supervision for RSVP volunteers as needed.**
- 5. Provide for adequate safety of volunteers on assignment.**
- 6. Collect and validate RSVP timesheets and return them to the RSVP office.**
- 7. Acknowledge RSVP and recognize your RSVP volunteers through publicity, annual reports, recognition events, and written acknowledgements.**

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8. When requested, provide data needed for RSVP to measure the outcomes and impact of RSVP volunteer activities.

9. Provide proof of 501(c)3 status.

10. Maintain the confidentiality of RSVP volunteers.

RSVP provides each station with timesheets to record volunteer hours that are entered into the Volunteer Reporter data system, which has the capability to run a number of statistical reports and filter data to accurately measure program outputs and outcomes. Many volunteer station coordinators meet quarterly through the Volunteer Administrators' Network (VAN) to network, sharpen management skills, and to share resources to mobilize and train volunteers. The RSVP Director and Coordinators meet both in person and via conference call to update program information and identify training needs. Training opportunities are identified through formal and informal evaluation to ensure implementation of program goals. In 2013 RSVP will revise the Volunteer Handbook and Station Handbook to reflect the updated CNCS focus areas, community priorities, and output/outcome measurements.

In addition to Education, RSVP program activities will also address the focus areas of Healthy Futures, Financial Literacy, Capacity Building, and other community needs. In the area of Healthy Futures, RSVP volunteers will serve older and homebound seniors as well as Iowans experiencing food insecurity.

Meals on Wheels enables adults to remain healthy and independent in the community by preventing malnutrition, reducing the risk of chronic diseases and related disabilities, supporting better mental and physical functioning, and managing common chronic diseases. Fifty unduplicated (55 total) RSVP volunteers will deliver hot noon meals on a daily basis to 200 homebound adults who are in need of and request nutritional services in the service area thereby connecting them to nutritious meals and increased social support. Approximately 1217 meals will be delivered monthly.

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According to the National Center on Senior Transportation (NCST), transportation is the second greatest need of older adults in our country as they may outlive their ability to drive by 6-8 years. Access to transportation is one of the most important factors in the daily lives of older adults because it helps them maintain vitality and independence. The same physical or mental limitations that make it difficult or impossible for the 85+ population to drive can also make it difficult or impossible for public transportation services to meet their transportation needs. Many lack affordable and available transportation to appointments such as medical, dental and eye exams, chemotherapy and radiation treatments, physical and occupational therapy, and kidney dialysis. Cabs are expensive even in the cities and public transportation is non-existent in rural areas. Iowans of all ages often have to drive hundreds of miles to access specialized medical care at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. RSVP volunteers will transport and serve as escorts providing door-through-door service for older adults with transportation needs both in cities and rural areas. As they transport them home, volunteers will also visit with the individuals to assure they are stable and not in need of further assistance.

Fifty-five unduplicated (60 total) RSVP volunteers will spend up to 150 hours per month providing transportation services to 160 unduplicated individuals annually. Approximately 90 trips will be provided monthly. Based on the need identified in previous years, we estimate that these 55 volunteers will provide over 1080 trips and drive over 21,000 miles. In past surveys older adults reported that transportation services improved their access to necessary medical appointments while reducing the level of stress involved in making and keeping medical appointments.

According to recent data from Drake University, over 421,000 Iowans do not always have enough food to eat. The Iowa Food Assistance Program is the most critical component of the safety net against hunger because it provides basic protection for people of all ages and household status. Its purpose is to provide low-income persons of limited resources with access to food. The number of

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eligible seniors that access the Food Assistance Program is believed to be low due to stigma and pride, misinformation, and confusion about eligibility. Food security in the elderly is associated not only with limited food affordability, but also with inadequate food utilization, resulting in poorer nutrition and health.

RSVP will partner with the Department of Human Services and Iowa State University Extension to mobilize volunteers to present information about nutrition and Food Assistance eligibility to area seniors. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the new name for the federal food stamp program. This name reflects the changes made to meet the needs of clients, with a renewed focus on nutrition and its associated benefits. RSVP volunteers will education older adults about the types of food they need to stay healthy as they age, and how, on a fixed income, they can purchase these foods through SNAP. Volunteers will also be trained to help older Iowans determine their eligibility and apply for benefits.

The Crisis Center Food Bank of Johnson County provides non-perishable, produce, bakery, deli, dairy, and health and hygiene items to Johnson County residents in need. During fiscal year 2012, over 800 families were served at the food bank each week which is a 19% increase from the previous year, totaling more than 41,000 visits. Each year, an average of 1,500 new households use the food bank for the first time and return clients visit an average of nine times each year. As the number of families served has double over the past year, the Crisis Center depends heavily on volunteers to provide needed services for community members in economic crisis. Fifteen unduplicated (20 total) RSVP volunteers will work in the Crisis Center food bank providing an average of 200 hours per month where they will interview clients, sort donated items, and distribute food.

The National Performance Measure outputs that will be addressed by the RSVP programs included in Healthy Futures are: H8: Number of individuals receiving independent living services; H10: Number of individuals receiving emergency food from food banks or other organizations; and H11: Number of

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individuals getting support, education and/or referrals for hunger. The National Performance Measure outcome that will be addressed by these activities is H9: Number of individuals with disabilities having increased social support.

In the area of Financial Literacy, RSVP volunteers will work with the Iowa Insurance Division to educate older adults about potential investment scams and fraudulent tactics. In the United States, 24 million people are the victim of some type of fraud each year. The elderly are the fastest growing segment of our population and are uniquely vulnerable to a broad range of exploitation and abuse. Older adults are often the target of financial crimes due their substantial disposable income, their interest in preserving and growing their retirement accounts, and the likelihood of owning their own home. The Iowa Insurance Division offers Seniors Against Investment Fraud (SAIF), a program to help older Iowans learn how to protect themselves from fraud. Trained volunteers provide presentations to senior groups or pre-retirees to education them about what to be aware of in the world of investments and financial scams.

In the area of Capacity Building, RSVP volunteers will work with the Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center to help recruit and schedule volunteers, register donors, transport blood products, and update the profiles of donors as needed. It is estimated that 9 out of 10 people will need blood sometime in their lives. Blood drives are an important source for cancer, leukemia, and accident patients treated at area health care facilities. Repeat donors are the key to ensuring adequate blood supplies in the future; therefore, it is critical that blood donors view their experience as positive and efficient.

RSVP volunteers will also provide services to meet other Community Priorities. One hundred twenty unduplicated volunteers will provide 15,000 volunteer hours to support the activities of organizations and agencies in RSVP's four counties. These activities include, but are not limited to providing mediation services for the Johnson County District Court, serving congregate meals to elders,

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providing administrative support to law enforcement agencies, assisting patients at the Veteran's Hospital, and serving as volunteer patients for medical and nursing students. The University of Iowa is a large teaching hospital, and the Carver College of Medicine educational staff recognize a need to increase the competence of physicians in the field of geriatrics beyond books and lectures and have requested RSVP volunteers for 10 years to serve as volunteer patients. Twenty unduplicated (32 total) RSVP volunteers will be scheduled throughout the spring semester to provide 60 individual 2 hour appointments. Volunteer Patients are particularly helpful to students who will become future Family Practice or General Practitioners. Routinely, 80% of the medical students report that this experience increased their interviewing skills and knowledge of health care needs of older adults. Eighty-five percent agree or strongly agree that this experience improved their assessment skills as a physician. Although RSVP values all volunteer stations and community partners, program staff and the Advisory Council recognize that there may be a time when stations need to be graduated due to changing community needs or because the need for RSVP assistance has been met. In this situation, station representatives will be recognized at the annual breakfast and presented with a certificate of appreciation. If necessary, staff will refer stations to other area agencies for future volunteer needs. Prior to this graduation, RSVP staff will meet with any affected volunteers to discuss options and volunteer opportunities with other stations.

RSVP works to ensure the accurate collection and management of data to support CNCS outputs and outcomes. RSVP timesheets are used to record volunteer hours and are collected monthly from each station. RSVP staff work with station coordinators to establish data collection procedures to accurately measure the impact of RSVP activities. These measures include, but are not limited to, pre- and post-tests administered to students K-12, satisfaction surveys, activity logs, and reports from station coordinators. Specific outcome and output instruments are included in the performance measures.

### **Organizational Capability**

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RSVP has a sound history regarding management of project resources, both financial and in-kind. Each year the RSVP Director prepares a budget for the program sponsor, taking into account volunteer recruitment needs, recognition events, supplies, and training opportunities. Elder Service, Inc. (ESI) supports RSVP by providing the agency's accountant to serve as a financial resource to the RSVP Director. This financial professional prepares annual reports and maintains all financial records for RSVP, providing the RSVP Director with monthly financial information to manage the program's resources. The RSVP Director signs and submits bills for payment for all programs and activities in the four county service area. ESI's oversight of project finances and compliance with regularly scheduled audits ensures accountability and effective use of resources. The CNCS federal investment of \$71,281 will be supplemented by funds from Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service (\$31,173), New Freedom Fund (\$45,000), the Iowa Insurance Division (\$1,200) and donations from individuals and corporations (\$910).

The RSVP Director is supervised by the Executive Director of ESI meets with her each month to review program activities and ensure all needed program resources are available. The RSVP Director adheres to the financial procedures of ESI and all financial resources funnel through the agency's accounting department. The RSVP Director must prepare an annual budget for ESI, the Advisory Board, and the State of Iowa. All financial and grant reports are kept in secured file cabinets and password protected files. Check disbursement requests, receipts, and deposit slips are kept and reviewed at the end of each grant year. The Executive Director of ESI meets regularly with the Board of Director's financial accountant who is responsible for the agency's financial stability and long-range planning. The Board of Directors and Advisory Council members take a leadership role in community coordination, volunteer recruitment, fundraising, and marketing.

The RSVP Director oversees four counties and manages the Johnson County program. In 2011, this

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included a total of 529 volunteers providing services to 61 stations in four counties. RSVP also employs three part-time coordinators in Des Moines County (25 hours a week), Muscatine County (10 hours a week and 5 hour a week assistant ), and Johnson County (24 hours a week). RSVP Coordinators are responsible for developing and maintaining volunteer stations in their respective counties to address specific community needs. Coordinators visit sites on a regular basis to ensure that volunteer and station needs are being met by assessing their satisfaction, reviewing job descriptions and updating MOUs.

ESI was founded in 1980 and has sponsored RSVP since its inception in 1990. The mission of ESI is to provide programs, services, and resources to assist persons age 60 and older in Johnson County and east central Iowa to stay active, independent, and safe in their own homes. Over the past 20 years, RSVP and ESI have placed and managed over 2000 volunteers. Some volunteers have served with RSVP for over 15 years. RSVP partners with ESI to ensure programmatic and fiscal oversight, day to day operational supports, and data collection. The RSVP Advisory Council is comprised of a diverse group of individuals representing many facets of the community. All members of the Advisory Council have extensive experience with older Iowans and are well informed about unmet community needs. The Advisory Council helps the RSVP Director form partnerships with local organizations, implement new initiatives while recruiting and recognizing volunteers. New initiatives for the coming year include Veteran Services and Environmental Stewardship especially during Days of Service.

ESI has adequate space for the RSVP Director in its 4,000 square foot main office on the east side of Iowa City. All computer and office equipment has been recently upgraded and the main office network meets or exceeds the 99% reliability guarantee. ESI has been a compliant and trusted partner of the Corporation of National and Community Service. RSVP has a strong history of local financial support through Elder Services, Inc., and has been sponsored by ESI for 20 years. RSVP will continue

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to work with area agencies and local partners to ensure sustainability and will secure additional funds as program needs arise. This grant ensures strong community presence and strategic collaborations.

### **other**

N/A

### **PNS Amendment (if applicable)**

N/A