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### Executive Summary

An estimated 350 unduplicated volunteers will serve citizens of all ages through RSVP of St. Mary's County, including active seniors and seniors with age-related disabilities; homebound persons with disabilities and the frail elderly; elderly veterans and veterans with disabilities; economically disadvantaged individuals and families; home caregivers; young students and adult learners.

Our project will address the Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area by providing medical transportation, food delivery, respite care, health and nutrition information, fitness coaching, health-related technology training, medical and assistive equipment delivery, health benefits and access information, emergency food, and social support to homebound persons. Our volunteers will also offer financial literacy and tax counseling, emergency and disaster services, adult literacy tutoring, educational tours, veterans services, and senior center support.

Service activities will take place at the homes of frail seniors and persons with disabilities; community centers; senior activity centers; senior housing communities; public schools, libraries, and museums; emergency services and disaster preparedness sites; health service centers; and food pantries.

At the end of the three-year grant: 500 persons of all ages will be better informed on local health services, programs, and activities that promote a healthy lifestyle; 600 homebound seniors and persons with disabilities will receive the food, transportation, assistive equipment, wellness checks, and social support services they need to remain living independently; 550 economically disadvantaged individuals and families will receive financial literacy and emergency food services; 100 family caregivers will receive the respite care they need to relieve stress and remain healthy; and 300 seniors with age-related disabilities will be equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to successfully manage their health conditions and remain living independently.

The proposed number of stations for this project is 40. The CNCS federal investment of \$39,260 will be supplemented by \$28,152 of non-federal resources.

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## Strengthening Communities

St. Mary's County, the community we serve, is located in one of the most beautiful regions of Southern Maryland. Surrounded on three sides by water, St. Mary's County occupies a peninsula bordered by the Patuxent River, the Potomac River, and the Chesapeake Bay. The region is steeped in history and was home to Maryland's founding capital. Much of the county is rural, populated by farmers, watermen, and scenic countryside vistas.

A huge transformation took place in St. Mary's County about 15 years ago when the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) brought thousands of jobs and people to Naval Air Station Patuxent River. Joining the ranks of these newcomers were many military and civilian personnel with the Naval Air Systems Command, headquarters of U.S. Naval Aviation, which relocated from the Washington metropolitan region to St. Mary's County. This large influx of personnel brought increased demands for community services, as well as a new source of highly qualified, enthusiastic, and talented senior volunteers.

The transformation has been significant. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), St. Mary's County has the fastest growing population in Maryland. In the past ten years, the number of people living in St. Mary's has increased 22 percent. The reason for this growth is the availability of high-paying jobs, most of them at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, which employs more than 22,000 military and civilian personnel (Dept. of Economic and Community Development 2011).

The aging population in St. Mary's County is also expected to grow at a faster rate than elsewhere in Maryland. In 2000, the county's population of persons aged 60 or older was 10,876. In 2010, that figure had increased to 17,486. By 2030, the number of persons aged 60 or older is expected to be 38,991, a 258.5% increase -- the largest percentage increase within the state.

One of our greatest challenges is to meet the community service needs of this expanding, aging population. We are also faced with the challenge that while much of our county has grown, large

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portions remain rural and isolated. Public transportation is inadequate or unavailable in outlying areas, putting homebound seniors and persons with disabilities at risk of not getting the services they need to maintain their health and independence.

There is also significant income disparity between high-salaried individuals who support the work of the naval air station and those who do not. The large influx of high-income workers has caused housing and land prices to increase substantially, causing a financial burden on those of less financial means. Particularly affected are low-income seniors and persons with disabilities as well as unemployed and underemployed individuals.

The Department of Aging and Human Services, sponsor of RSVP of St. Mary's County, has selected Healthy Futures as our Primary Focus Area. With a growing population that is putting ever-increasing demands on county services, it is imperative that we provide all community members with the information, tools, and programs they need to maintain their health and independence. Healthy, active seniors need information and resources on how to age well in place. Also, low-income seniors, the frail elderly, and persons with disabilities need information and assistance to help them manage their health and remain living independently.

One example of increasing demands for health services is our county's Senior Rides Program, which utilizes volunteer drivers to provide medical transportation services to homebound, low-income seniors. In 2008, the program had 7 volunteers who gave 85 rides to 26 unduplicated clients. In 2011, the program had 16 volunteers who gave 793 rides to 59 unduplicated clients. Currently, the program has 22 drivers who have provided 1,014 rides so far this year. In less than five years, rides have increased dramatically, from 85 rides per year to over 1,000 annually.

The Senior Rides Program depends entirely upon volunteer drivers utilizing their own vehicles to provide this essential transportation service. Not only would the program cease to exist without these volunteers, but a continual recruitment effort is needed to replenish the pool of volunteer drivers and

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to enlist new volunteers to meet growing demand. Expanded recruitment efforts are also needed for drivers willing to transport clients to major metropolitan areas for specialized medical treatments not available in our county.

The Meals on Wheels Program, which provides nutritious meals to homebound clients, represents another example where volunteer drivers with their own vehicles are critical to the delivery of essential health services to homebound seniors and persons with disabilities. In the past 12 months, volunteer drivers handled 1,826 meals routes serving 288 unduplicated homebound clients. These volunteers provided more than \$45,000 worth of meal delivery service. That figure equates to about 8,320 meals we were able to provide to homebound persons as a result of volunteer service. Of course, no price can be put on the value of our volunteers' personal contact with Meals on Wheels participants. Volunteers check on the welfare of each meal participant and are sometimes the homebound person's only human contact. If a volunteer finds that a meal participant is in need of medical attention, they immediately alert appropriate personnel. This essential volunteer service activity helps homebound persons maintain their health and independence while receiving the social support they need. 37 RSVP volunteers currently support the program, but continual and expanded recruitment and outreach efforts are needed to replenish volunteer ranks and to keep up with growing demand.

Another program that meets critical community health needs is ACTS, A Community That Shares. In this program, RSVP volunteers collect, renovate, and transport medical equipment and assistive devices such as walkers, canes, and wheelchairs to low-income homebound seniors, persons with disabilities, and individuals recuperating from surgery. This equipment is delivered free of charge to persons in need, enabling them to remain living independently in their own homes. Last year, RSVP volunteers provided free assistive and convalescent equipment to more than 500 clients. This program is supported entirely by RSVP volunteers and would cease to exist without their support.

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Another program that could not function without the support of RSVP volunteers is a Health Fair that serves more than 500 community members of all ages. Trained volunteers staff information booths and distribute essential information about community health services and programs. Volunteers handle registrations for hearing tests, blood pressure screenings, diabetes tests, skin cancer screenings, flu shots, and other health stations. Without the support of these trained volunteers, the event would not be possible.

Other critical health services provided by RSVP volunteers include in-home respite care for family members of Hospice patients; Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program instruction for seniors with age-related disabilities; "Matter of Balance" fitness coaching to educate seniors on how to prevent falls, one of the leading causes of age-related injury and death; computer technology trainers who teach seniors how to access online health information; health service advisors who counsel seniors on health insurance, access, and benefits; and food pantry volunteers who provide emergency food to economically disadvantaged individuals and families. Without RSVP volunteers, these programs would not be possible. In fact, our increasing population is creating ever greater demand for these services, requiring expanded volunteer recruitment and outreach efforts to keep pace with community health needs.

To address identified needs in our Primary Focus Area, we plan to utilize and expand upon proven, highly effective systems in place.

To manage RSVP Senior Rides volunteers and station, we will continue a strong partnership with the Senior Rides Coordinator, a paid staff person, who provides screening, training, and orientation of all volunteers referred. This person actively manages the program, performs rider-driver matches and dispatch services, meets regularly with volunteers to solicit feedback and suggestions, and collects client surveys of every ride. The Senior Rides Coordinator also tracks volunteer miles and provides mileage reimbursement out of Senior Rides Program funds. The RSVP Project Manager regularly

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meets with the Senior Rides Coordinator to discuss specific program needs and to focus volunteer recruitment efforts accordingly. The RSVP Project Manager attends Senior Rides volunteer meetings to solicit feedback and also participates in Senior Rides recognition events.

To manage RSVP Meals on Wheels (MoW) volunteers and station, we will continue a strong partnership with the MoW Coordinator, a paid staff person, who provides screening, orientation, and training to all volunteers referred. This person manages the program, matches drivers to meal routes, provides driving directions, and is available at all times to drivers for consultation and assistance. The MoW Coordinator tracks mileage and provides mileage reimbursement out of MoW Program funds. The MoW Coordinator also holds an annual recognition event for MoW volunteers. RSVP Project Manager confers regularly with the MoW Coordinator to review volunteer needs and to plan specific recruitment activities.

To manage A Community That Serves (ACTS) volunteers and station, RSVP Project Manager works closely with the ACTS Station Coordinator to ensure program needs are met. This program is supported by a consortium of community and faith-based organizations committed to meeting the needs of the homebound elderly and persons with disabilities. Their strong and impassioned community presence is evidenced in a steady supply of donated materials that are renovated and stored in a large warehouse, then transported free of charge to needy clients upon request.

To manage Health Information volunteers and station, RSVP Project Manager meets regularly with the station coordinator to discuss the provision of health insurance, benefits and access information to seniors by trained volunteers. This station provides an accessible community location and offers in-person counseling, phone support, and online assistance to elderly clients.

To manage Health Fair volunteers and station, RSVP Project Manager coordinates, plans, trains, schedules and supervises volunteers with project sponsor's Community Programs and Outreach Manager, a paid staff position. Through this collaborative effort, trained volunteers provide

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information on health programs, services, and resources for community members of all ages.

To manage Hospice Respite Care volunteers and station, RSVP Project Manager works closely with the Hospice Volunteer Coordinator, a paid staff person, who provides training, orientation, and placement of volunteer referrals. The Hospice Volunteer Coordinator delivers a comprehensive training program to ensure that caregivers receive quality, compassionate respite services.

To manage Food Pantry Volunteers and Station, the RSVP Project Manager works closely with the Food Pantry Station Supervisor to ensure emergency food services for clients with emergency needs. The Food Pantry Station Supervisor provides orientation, training, supervision, and scheduling of all referred volunteers.

To manage Senior Activity Leader volunteers and stations, RSVP Project Manager works closely with Senior Activity Center Operations Managers, Senior Program Specialists, and the Director of Senior Activity Center Operations to determine volunteer needs and placements related to Health Education training and coaching. Operations Managers and Program Specialists provide volunteer orientation, training, supervision, and scheduling.

The service activities in our Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area lead to National Performance Measure outputs and outcomes in the following ways: by ensuring that low-income, homebound seniors and persons with disabilities receive the medical transportation services, home-delivered meals, assistive devices, and social support they need to remain in their own homes; that seniors receive the health insurance, benefits, and access information they need to make informed choices that will ensure their access to quality, affordable health care; that community members of all ages receive the health education, programs, and services information they need to make informed, quality health-care choices; that family members receive the respite care they need to alleviate stress and provide relief from the demands of caregiving; that economically disadvantaged persons of all ages receive emergency food distributions to sustain them during their time of need; that aging seniors receive the

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health education, training, and coaching they need to maintain their health, improve their balance, strengthen their bones and muscles, and successfully manage chronic health conditions. Among our anticipated outcomes for these clients are an increased knowledge of health services and programs leading to good health choices, an increased sense of social support that promotes independent living, and increased food security during times of emergency need. All of these activities should improve the ability of service recipients to maintain their health and independence.

Our project has closely linked three major elements in our Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area: community needs identified, service activities carried out by RSVP volunteers, and anticipated National Performance Measure outputs and outcomes. A major need within our community is ensuring delivery of essential services and social supports to homebound persons that will enable them to maintain their health and independence. Our rapidly expanding senior population is producing an equally expanding population of frail elderly with age-related disabilities, in addition to other persons with disabilities. Lack of access to adequate public transportation due to the rural nature of large portions of our county also contributes to problems experienced by homebound seniors and persons with disabilities. For these reasons, delivering essential food, transportation, health, and social support services to homebound persons represents one of the most critical and compelling needs in our community. This includes RSVP Senior Rides volunteer drivers who transport homebound persons to medical appointments; RSVP Meals on Wheels volunteer drivers who deliver nutritious meals on a daily basis to homebound persons; and RSVP volunteers who deliver free medical devices and assistive equipment such as canes, wheelchairs, and walkers to homebound persons. All three of these RSVP service activities are closely aligned with our identified community need. These service activities align with the H8 National Performance Measure output which addresses number of homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities receiving food, transportation, or other services that allow them to live independently in a private residence. These three activities also align with the H9 National

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Performance Measure outcome which addresses the number of homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities who report having increased social ties/perceived social support. In all of three of these RSVP volunteer programs, our goal is to ensure that homebound persons receive the services they need to maintain their independent living status within their own home, in their own neighborhood, with family, friends, and social support systems in place.

In regards to veterans and military families, we have two members on our RSVP Community Advisory Committee who are very active in meeting the needs of our large veteran community. They lead and participate in Wounded Warrior service projects, Charlotte Hall Veterans Home service activities, Veterans Service Organization projects, and fundraising activities for veterans.

We also have many veterans serving as volunteers within our RSVP ranks, including a Meals on Wheels Route Coordinator, a Financial Literacy/Tax Aide Counselor, a Health Benefits Counselor, a Computer Technology Trainer, a Red Cross Health Clinic Volunteer, a Senior Rides Driver, a Hospice Volunteer, a Health Fair Volunteer, a Charlotte Hall Veterans Home Volunteer, a Commission on Aging member, a Food Pantry Volunteer, and a Learning is ForEver (LIFE) Program Volunteer.

Due to our proximity to Naval Air Station Patuxent River, many of our volunteers are veterans, have family members who are veterans, or have family members serving in the military. Our project, therefore, maintains strong ties to the local military community. This is exemplified by a group of 30 RSVP volunteers who visit elderly and disabled veterans at the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home every month. Other RSVP volunteers participate in annual events honoring veterans, including a Veterans Day Tribute and a 9-11 Day of Service and Remembrance. In all these ways, our RSVP project is committed to serving -- and engaging in service -- veterans, military members, and their families.

### **Recruitment and Development**

We have a solid plan and infrastructure to create high quality RSVP volunteer assignments with opportunities for our volunteers to share their experiences, abilities, and skills to improve our

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community and themselves through service. In our Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area, high quality opportunities exist for persons to volunteer with Meals on Wheels, Senior Rides, Respite Care, Health Information Counseling, Helping Hands Food Pantry, A Community That Cares, Health Information Presenters, Fitness Coaches, Exercise and Health Information Technology Instructors, and Senior Activity Trainers. These opportunities allow volunteers to choose a service activity based on their experiences, abilities, and skills. Additionally, we provide training opportunities for those who would like to expand into a new area of service. Training opportunities we offer volunteers include First Aid Training, CPR Certification, Arthritis Foundation Exercise Training, Matter of Balance Coaches Training, Hospice and Respite Care Training, Food Handlers Training, AARP Safe Driver Training, Community Emergency Response Team Training, and Emergency Services Training. If a volunteer expresses interest in additional training opportunities, we will seek out local resources where they can further develop their skills to enhance community service.

Our volunteers can select from a variety of opportunities that offer challenging and rewarding service experiences. Among these are Tax Aide Counselors and Financial Literacy Tutors. This activity includes extensive training and certification and is especially appealing to volunteers with a background in finance and accounting. Volunteers can also become Adult Literacy Tutors, an opportunity that provides training and a prescribed curriculum that appeals to persons with an education or counseling background. Volunteers with a technology background can become Computer Technology Trainers, helping seniors learn how to navigate the web to access health information and resources. Volunteers with an interest in fitness can become certified coaches who help seniors develop the muscle tone, balance, strength, and flexibility needed to age well in place. Volunteers with an interest in history, culture, and the environment can be trained as museum docents and can serve at various museum and historical sites, such as the Maryland Dove, a replica of the 17th-century sailing vessel that brought the first colonists to Maryland. Another public site is an

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animal sanctuary and demonstration farm where volunteers give educational tours to students and veterans groups. Several maritime museums, including a lighthouse, are among cultural sites where our volunteers can serve. Volunteers can also participate in seasonal service activities such as the Christmas Caring Program, where volunteers match community gift donations to economically disadvantaged families. Through all these offerings, volunteers can choose a service opportunity that is interesting, challenging, rewarding, and beneficial to our community.

In regards to recruiting RSVP volunteers from veterans and military families, our project is very successful in this area. As previously described, we have many veterans serving in our ranks.

Enhancing our recruitment efforts are several members of our RSVP Community Advisory Committee who have a strong presence in Veterans Service Organizations. Also, the RSVP Project Manager participates in community partnership activities that focus on service to veterans and military families. Our project also participates in public events honoring veterans as another way to enhance our outreach efforts to the military community.

In regards to recruiting volunteers with disabilities, including seniors with age-related disabilities, we currently have a large percentage of volunteers who fall into this category. Programs and services of our project sponsor, the Department of Aging and Human Services, are offered to persons of all abilities. Also, our RSVP office is located in a Senior Activity Center, and our open-door policy draws many center participants into our volunteer ranks. Many of these seniors report one or more age-related disabilities, such as diabetes, arthritis, and heart disease. One recent volunteer started serving at our senior activity center while in late-stage brain cancer. It was heart-warming to see he and his wife come into our center, hand in hand, performing service activities up until just days before he passed.

We strongly believe that actively engaging seniors in community service helps them successfully age in place, in their own home and neighborhood. Developing social ties, feeling needed and appreciated,

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continuing to lend their skills and talents to community needs -- all this contributes to a senior volunteer's ability to maintain their mental and emotional health. Additionally, we often find ways to work around a senior's disabilities. One recent senior had lung issues that prohibited him from performing service outdoors or that required much walking or standing. We were able to find a placement for him at a local museum where he can sit while greeting visitors and providing them with local historical and cultural information. It's a very busy site that keeps him actively engaged. He is delighted with his placement, and the volunteer station is delighted with him.

We embrace seniors with age-related disabilities because we know they have so many abilities to offer. Our senior volunteers display a great can-do spirit and an enthusiasm for service despite their physical aches, pains, and limitations. We have volunteers in their 70s, 80s, and even 90s who provide medical transportation services, deliver assistive devices to homebound persons, and distribute emergency food to needy families. While some of these seniors may use canes or walkers, they continue to provide services that are needed and appreciated.

Another aspect of utilizing volunteers with age-related disabilities is that many of these volunteers take advantage of programming at our senior activity centers that helps them manage their conditions, such as Living Well with Chronic Conditions, Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program, and Matter of Balance workshops. Our more active senior volunteers lead some of these programs, and some of our senior volunteers with age-related disabilities take part in the classes. These seniors with age-related disabilities will then volunteer in a service activity more suitable to their ability level. This inclusive approach treats each senior as having something valuable to contribute, regardless of physical limitations.

Our project also makes a point to include volunteers of all races, ethnicities, sexual orientation, and degrees of English language proficiency. We have a volunteer who speaks fluent Spanish who serves as an Adult Literacy Tutor. She is especially effective in this role since Spanish is the main language of

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many of the tutoring program clients.

We also seek diverse representation on volunteer boards and committees, such as the Learning is ForEver Planning Committee, to help us attract and serve diverse clients. In our marketing materials, program displays, PowerPoint presentations, and other recruitment materials, we include diverse images so that we send a clear message of diversity and inclusiveness.

We have a number of established and effective ways to retain, recognize, and appreciate RSVP volunteers. Regular visits to volunteer stations is one important way of showing volunteers that we're interested in what they're doing. This also provides opportunities to solicit feedback, suggestions, and training ideas from volunteers. These visits give Station Coordinators an opportunity to provide suggestions on ways to improve the volunteer experience. Clients also provide valuable feedback that helps us make service delivery enhancements.

To retain volunteers, we employ a variety of communication vehicles that help us highlight and profile volunteer contributions. These include a volunteer newsletter, feature articles, and press releases. These efforts put a spotlight on the services our volunteers perform, provide an opportunity to show community impact, and give volunteers a sense of pride in what they do.

Individual meetings with volunteers also provide an opportunity to discuss their service experience, to explore ways for continuing growth, and to discuss additional placement opportunities. Occasionally, we find that a volunteer is ready to move on to a new assignment, and meeting with them allows us to explore new avenues for them to contribute in rewarding ways.

Our program also hosts an annual, large-scale volunteer appreciation luncheon at which volunteers are recognized for their service and are presented with awards for hours and years of service. Our county commissioners attend the luncheon, offer their appreciation, and hand out awards to the volunteers. The event also features a slide show of images from the past year, providing volunteers an opportunity to see the range of RSVP services being performed in our community. This promotes a

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sense of group accomplishment and pride. A large check presented to our county commissioners representing the monetary value of their service also underscores the importance of their contributions to our community.

### Program Management

We have an established plan and infrastructure to ensure management of our volunteer stations in compliance with RSVP program regulations including preventing or identifying prohibited activities. RSVP Project Manager attended Project Manager Training at CNCS National Conference and regularly participates in CNCS webinars, conference calls, and online training sessions. We maintain a binder of RSVP program regulations in our office and regularly review these regulations in the management of our program. Additionally, we maintain regular contact with our CNCS State Office, participating in quarterly conference calls, trainings, and onsite meetings as well as phone and e-mail contact. Through an active partnership with our CNCS State office, we maintain open lines of communication and readily seek clarification and direction on RSVP program regulations. Also, as a member of the Maryland-Delaware RSVP Directors Association, the RSVP Project Manager is able to discuss program regulations and compliance issues with fellow RSVP Directors. Special attention is given to preventing or identifying prohibited activities and, if questions arise, we seek clarification and direction from our CNCS State Office. We also make regular site visits to volunteer stations to ensure compliance and to prevent or identify prohibited activities. In all cases, we would take immediate action to rectify a concern should one arise and would be sure to keep our state CNCS State Program Officer fully informed and engaged throughout the process, following their guidance and direction. We have an effective plan and infrastructure to develop and oversee volunteer stations that address specified community needs outside our Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area. One of the other focus areas we plan to address is Financial Literacy and Income Tax Tutoring. We have a highly qualified, trained, and certified RSVP Volunteer who has a professional background in accounting and has

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considerable experience training, coordinating, and scheduling RSVP financial literacy and income tax tutors. We have multiple community locations that serve as sites for this volunteer activity, making the services accessible to a broad range of economically disadvantaged citizens. We have a solid core of trained volunteers to provide this service and plan to recruit additional volunteers to expand services to keep up with growing demand. Training and certification is required annually of all volunteers, even those previously certified, to ensure up-to-date skills. This service is offered in partnership with AARP and follows strict program guidelines and reporting requirements.

Another focus area we plan to address is Veterans and Military Families, as described in the Strengthening Communities narrative. Our project engages many veterans in volunteer service, and we also provide services to veterans. These include visitation to residents of Charlotte Hall Veterans Home, as well as multiple community activities honoring and engaging veterans in service. We also plan to address the Disaster Assistance focus area through a partnership with the St. Mary's County Emergency Services Department. In cooperation with the Emergency Services Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Coordinator, RSVP will focus and coordinate efforts on recruiting senior volunteers to fill gaps in essential emergency services, especially where daytime coverage is critically needed. RSVP will also coordinate activities with the division's Director of Emergency Services who oversees training and deployment of Community Emergency Response Teams. These volunteers will take part in, and assist with, disaster preparedness training.

Volunteer service activities outside our Primary Focus Area represent needs that would be unmet without the contributions of RSVP volunteers. In almost all cases, the community service activities are entirely supported by volunteers and would cease to exist without volunteer involvement. In regards to financial literacy tutoring and tax aide counseling, utilizing volunteers is what makes this service free to low-income clients. In regards to Community Emergency Response Team members, there is such a broad need for trained disaster preparedness volunteers that recruiting senior

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volunteers is essential to the program's success. In regards to emergency services response, the recruitment of senior volunteers is essential to fill gaps in service currently unmet by other community volunteers.

In the Community Priorities Focus Area, we have established partnerships with local non-profits that rely on RSVP volunteers to function. These include local museums, parks, and other public sites that have a small professional staff. At these locations, volunteers are needed to provide services such as student tours, weekend coverage, extended hours, and special event support.

Another RSVP volunteer activity in the Community Priorities Focus Area is Adult Literacy Tutors. Other than a paid coordinator, this program exists entirely on volunteer support and would not function without the involvement of volunteers.

The Christmas Caring Program, which matches community gift donations with the children of economically disadvantaged families, utilizes a paid staff person to coordinate the program but relies on volunteers to handle receiving, processing, matching, and distributing gifts. RSVP volunteers serve in leading and support roles in other volunteer service activities described in our Community Priorities work plan. In all cases, the volunteer stations rely on their service and contributions. These non-profits have limited paid staff with core responsibilities that prohibit them from providing the range of services and hours of operation that RSVP volunteers make possible. Our volunteers are key to the success of these non-profits and to the community services they provide.

Our project is able to recruit and manage volunteer stations that address community needs outside our Primary Focus Area through long-standing, successful, and effective partnerships. These needs are "unmet" to the extent that our region's expanding population has created an increased demand for services that requires more volunteers and expanded volunteer recruitment efforts to meet those demands.

To meet the growing demand for community services, we plan to expand recruitment efforts aimed at

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reaching newcomers to our area as well as newly retired persons entering the volunteer workforce.

We also plan to focus outreach on community and faith-based groups where we can recruit volunteer teams to supplement the work of individual volunteers. In regards to managing these volunteer stations, we would apply the same management tools and infrastructure we apply to managing volunteer stations in our Primary Focus area.

If we determine that we need to graduate volunteer stations to meet changing community needs, we would do so in a way that minimizes disruptions to current volunteers. We would identify stations that do not align with National Performance Measures, our Primary Focus Area, Other Focus Areas, or Community Priorities. We would also identify stations that are underperforming either in terms of reporting requirements, volunteer management, or volunteer participation. We would graduate those stations and related partnership activities. Volunteers at those sites would be given the opportunity to volunteer at other RSVP volunteer stations or would be encouraged to continue serving as a non-RSVP volunteer. In all cases, we would express appreciation for the important contributions of the volunteers and the volunteer station while underscoring the importance of responding to changing priorities to meet community needs.

We have an effective plan and infrastructure to assure that national performance measure outputs and outcomes are measured and collected. Depending upon the volunteer station and service activity, we will utilize activity logs, attendance records, and other data-gathering tools to document client services provided by RSVP volunteers. We will also conduct client surveys to track outcomes and performance measure outputs.

All outcomes for our project are associated with the Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area, which include the Senior Rides program and Meals on Wheels program, which both have paid staff working as program coordinators through our RSVP project sponsor. These individuals recognize the importance of compiling data to report on outputs and outcomes, and they will ensure compliance.

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The RSVP Project Manager will ensure that client surveys contain specific questions related to outputs and outcomes.

A Community That Shares, also one of our Primary Focus Area work plans, regularly gathers and reports data on the delivery of medical equipment and assistive devices to homebound persons with disabilities. This program maintains an extensive inventory and utilizes a large database to track all equipment received, renovated, and distributed to clients.

For other service activities associated with our project, we collect data from volunteer stations on output, client services, and outcomes. We have an established and successful record of meeting project reporting requirements and will continue to do so.

We also have in place an effective plan and infrastructure to manage project resources to ensure accountability and efficient and effective use of available resources. Our project follows financial management systems, accounting practices, and fiscal policies and procedures established by county government, which are consistent with federal grant requirements. A Fiscal Supervisor within the Department of Aging and Human Services oversees the RSVP budget, tracking all line-item expenditures, ensuring that funds are available, that requests for payment follow established guidelines, that all necessary signatures have been obtained, that all required documentation is attached, and that all records are properly submitted. Budget information is retained in electronic format and backed-up regularly by the county's Department of Emergency Services and Information Technology. All financial reports required as part of the federal funding guidelines are completed and submitted on a timely basis. The entire accounting system associated with our Project Sponsor and RSVP of St. Mary's County is on par with the highest standards of professional fiscal management.

### **Organizational Capability**

Our project offers established plans and infrastructure to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight, day-to-day operational support and data collection, and clearly defined internal policies. In

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regards to programmatic oversight, the RSVP Project Manager meets regularly with the Director of the Department of Aging and Human Services, project sponsor, to review program goals and objectives in relation to current and planned activities. RSVP Project Manager also participates in the sponsor's management team meetings on a regular basis. Monthly, bi-annual and annual progress reports on project activities and accomplishments, especially as they relate to CNCS strategic initiatives, are submitted to the CNCS State Office. Our project also submits monthly progress reports to the department director and county commissioners.

In regards to fiscal oversight, the sponsor's Fiscal Supervisor oversees the RSVP project budget and expenditures to ensure all county fiscal policies and federal guidelines are being adhered to. The county's finance department also reviews and monitors the project budget to ensure compliance.

Specific RSVP budget questions are also reviewed with the CNCS State Program Officer.

Day-to-day operational support is provided by the project sponsor and other divisions within county government, such as the Information Technology Department. Data collection is handled by the RSVP Project Manager, Office Specialist, and individual volunteer stations. Data submitted by volunteers and volunteer stations is entered into our Volunteer Reporter database, which allows us to track and generate reports on program inputs, outputs, and outcomes. Client and volunteer surveys are also conducted to provide data on outputs and outcomes.

Our RSVP project follows well-developed internal policies that adhere to county government regulations, including personnel policies established by the county's Human Resources Department and fiscal policies and procedures established by the county's Finance Department. Our project also follows policies and procedures established by CNCS related to project operations, which are compiled in an Operations Manual as well as Volunteer Handbooks and Volunteer Station Handbooks.

Our project is staffed by one full-time RSVP Project Manager and one part-time Office Specialist. The RSVP Project Manager is responsible for overall program management, day-to-day project operations,

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volunteer recruitment and management, program marketing and publicity, community outreach and needs assessment, volunteer station development and management, data collection and reporting, volunteer recognition and appreciation, and staff supervision. The RSVP Project Manager offers more than 20 years' experience in volunteer management, community relations, and communications as well as extensive experience working with active-duty military, veterans, and civil service personnel engaged in educational and community-based volunteer programs.

The RSVP Project Manager reports directly to the Director of the Department of Aging and Human Services, who has more than 25 years' experience working with senior populations and issues related to health and human services. The Department Director is especially knowledgeable on issues related to aging well in place and promotes programs and services that help citizens of all ages maintain their health and independence. Through regular supervision, consultation, and oversight, the Department Director provides guidance on senior issues, health programming, and volunteer management as well as community needs assessment, partnership building, and leadership development.

The part-time RSVP Office Specialist provides administrative and programmatic support to the RSVP project, including data gathering and entry, report generation, recordkeeping, file management, and assistance with special projects, programs, and activities. The current incumbent has served in this position for more than three years and offers a high degree of administrative, budgetary, and database skills, including solid skills in volunteer management software to aid in collecting data and generating reports. This individual has also served as an AmeriCorps volunteer and is well-versed in issues related to volunteers and community service.

The two RSVP Project staff positions will be sustained by local, county funds. Our county commissioners have shown long-term, continuing support for the program and have approved project funding in the upcoming budget. They highly value the contributions of our senior volunteers, regularly participate in recognition events, and publicly acknowledge the importance of senior

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volunteers in strengthening our community.

The Department of Aging and Human Services, RSVP project sponsor, has more than 30 years' experience managing senior volunteers, including a long-established track record of managing volunteers in the Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area. The Department has managed the Meals on Wheels and Senior Rides programs for many years, both of which rely upon volunteer drivers to deliver program services. Paid staff coordinate these programs, ensuring that volunteers receive the training and supervision they need to be successful.

These programs are essential to helping homebound seniors and persons with disabilities remain in their own homes, and performance measurement is a key component of both programs. Data is collected on service delivery through activity logs, and client surveys provide important information on program accomplishments and impacts. The demand for these critical community health services continues to grow as our local aging population expands, underscoring the importance of continuing and expanded recruitment of senior volunteers.

The project sponsor also has considerable experience managing senior volunteers in other Healthy Futures service activities, including senior activity center volunteers who provide fitness coaching, health presentations, and technology instruction that enables seniors to access online health information. The project sponsor has successfully managed food pantry and soup kitchen volunteers who provide emergency food to needy individuals and families. Additionally, the project sponsor has successfully managed volunteers who provide free medical equipment to homebound seniors and persons with disabilities, volunteers who provide respite care to family member caregivers, and volunteers who provide information and counseling on health insurance, benefits, and access.

Our project works closely with the Department of Aging and Human Services to identify community needs where RSVP volunteers can make the most impact. Through comprehensive record keeping, reporting, and assessment, we track project performance and make adjustments for more effective

## Narratives

service delivery. In this way, we strive to provide meaningful service activities in which senior volunteers can fully express, utilize, and develop their skills to the betterment of our community.

As an integral part of the Department of Aging and Human Services, our RSVP project operates under the auspices of local county government which provides all employees with the facilities, equipment, and supplies they need to do their job. In addition to meeting financial obligations associated with the federal grant, our sponsor is committed to providing office space, supplies, computers, desks, filing equipment, phones, and any other tangible assets needed to manage our project.

Our project sponsor has a well-defined governance structure and internal policies with clearly defined roles for staff and administrators. Our sponsor follows all personnel policies and procedures established by the county's Human Resources Department as published in a comprehensive Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual. Our project sponsor also follows all fiscal policies and procedures established by the county's Finance Department that govern purchases, expenditures, travel, and mileage reimbursement.

The project sponsor also has well-developed internal policies and assigns a Fiscal Supervisor to provide regular oversight of all budget and fiscal matters related to the RSVP grant, including tracking the budget, processing all expenditures, and producing reports. The person in this position has over a decade of professional financial management experience and follows a well-defined fiscal policy established by county government in accordance with federal guidelines.

To ensure input from the community, our RSVP project has formed a Community Advisory Committee. The members of this committee are knowledgeable in community needs, competent in the field of community service and senior volunteers, and help meet administrative and program capabilities. Our advisory committee members reflect the diverse demographics of our region and play an important role in identifying critical community needs. Members also assist with program assessment, development, and improvement. Additionally, the RSVP project manager ensures

## Narratives

community input by meeting with members of local non-profit agencies, community groups, and service organizations to solicit feedback on community needs, project activities, and program delivery. The project sponsor has extensive experience with financial management systems and managing federal grant funds, including more than 30 federal grants and budgets that support a wide range of community service programs. Our project follows fiscal policies and procedures established by county government, which are consistent with federal grant requirements. A Fiscal Supervisor oversees the RSVP budget and tracks all line-item expenditures, ensuring that funds are available, that requests for payment follow established guidelines, that all necessary signatures have been obtained, that all required documentation is attached, and that all records are properly submitted. Project budget information is retained in electronic format and backed-up regularly by the county's Information Technology Department. All financial reports required as part of the federal funding guidelines are completed and submitted on a timely basis. Additionally, the accounting systems the project adheres to conform to the highest standards of professional fiscal management.

The proposed non-federal share for this RSVP project, at almost 42% of the total budget, is more than adequate to support the proposed project and exceeds the required 30% non-federal match. This local investment reflects the strong community and governmental support our project enjoys. Our county commissioners publicly acknowledge the positive impact our senior volunteers are having on our community, and they highly value our volunteers' contributions in meeting critical community needs. Even during this time of fiscal constraint, our commissioners recognize the considerable return they are getting on their investment in RSVP and senior volunteers, and they continue to show strong, unwavering support.

In terms of project sustainability, our commissioners have made a long-term investment in this program and have given every indication they will continue to do so. They express public support, participate in program activities and recognition events, and have included the county's share of

## **Narratives**

program funding in the upcoming budget. Our project is regarded as a strategic investment in our county's future in terms of services performed and contributions to the community. Our senior volunteers are regarded as one of our county's greatest resources, and our commissioners are committed to sustaining their investment in this important resource.

Contributing to the cost effectiveness and adequacy of our proposed budget are the significant non-monetary contributions the county provides, including office space, equipment, utilities, and phone service as well as staff supervision, fiscal oversight, and technology support. Also, volunteer mileage reimbursement is provided by the Senior Rides and Meals on Wheels programs. Volunteer stations contribute by providing training and meals (if volunteers serve during meal time), and by offering recognition events for their station volunteers. Our proposed budget includes sufficient funds for insurance and criminal history background checks as well as adequate funding for volunteer recruitment, support, and an annual recognition event. All of these contributions represent strong program support at the local level, solid budget adequacy that meets or exceeds requirements, and long-term project sustainability that will secure the program's future for many years to come.

**Other**

N/A

**PNS Amendment (if applicable)**

N/A