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Executive Summary

The Volunteer Center of East Central WI is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization created to develop, coordinate and promote volunteerism that addresses community needs within northeast WI-- Outagamie and Calumet counties. The majority of these activities occur in Outagamie Co. The RSVP volunteers also provide rides and tutor in Calumet County, town of Chilton.

Our Priority Focus Area is Healthy Futures. The 96 RSVP volunteers who participate in this focus area provide seniors with rides to medical appointments, social activities and community engagement; provide veterans rides to the nearest VA Hospital; visit isolated homebound seniors; provide respite to families who are caring for a loved one at home; and provide hospice services all to assist seniors in Aging In Place. RSVP provides Access to Care by leading RSVP Strong Bones program, which attracts mainly seniors. For youth, the RSVP volunteers provide Access to Care by leading a drug abuse prevention education program; and providing a vision screening service which results in follow-up information provided to the parents of the screened preschool children.

The Volunteer Center of East Central WI requests \$84,143.00 for the RSVP Project annually for three years: April 2013-March 2016. The required matching funds of \$36,061 and additional \$6,271 will come from the Volunteer Center's fund-raising efforts and in-kind donations such as rent.

In summary, the Volunteer Center of East Central WI and RSVP facilitates strong community relationships and a variety of volunteer opportunities. The Volunteer Center has strong funding relationships, one offering rent--free office space since 2003. Even with the 20% decrease in funding earlier this year, the Volunteer Center has maintained its staff and benefits at the level it had prior to the grant reductions. Our strong economic community partners have played a key role in the effort.

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Strengthening Communities

The Volunteer Center of East Central WI's RSVP project serves the communities in Outagamie and Calumet County with most of the volunteer activity taking place in the Fox Cities/Appleton area. Calumet County beyond Chilton, the County Seat, is rural. Part of Appleton lies in Calumet County and is about a half hour drive from Chilton.

According to the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce, the economic health in this region has been declining or remaining flat for the past five years. High percentages of employment as documented by the local Chamber are in the following two areas: Trade, Transportation and Utilities; and Manufacturing. Our community relies heavily on the paper industry and is referred to as the "Paper Valley." In the past several years the paper industry has become less vibrant due to production facilities moving south or overseas. Overall, unemployment and poverty rates are rising. This has put a strain on all social service resources, particularly those providing for peoples' basic needs. Building the transportation program has been challenging but the common theme of helping seniors remain in their own homes seems to appeal to a large audience.

Our primary focus area is Healthy Futures which contains our work in a program marked by a high level of RSVP involvement called "Making the Ride Happen," a transportation program serving people age 60 and older. RSVP staff has been active since this program's inception and a leader in the policy development, application process, background checks, insurance coverage as well as the recruitment of the volunteer drivers. The RSVP Assistant Director is the Advisory Council President for "Making the Ride Happen."

Additional programming that RSVP supports is "ElderMatch". "ElderMatch" is a collaborative effort

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between Lutheran Social Services and RSVP. The clients are screened by the program case worker. These are seniors who are isolated and living in their own home. Some of the activities are visiting once a week or every 10 days to engage in an activity of the clients choosing. The clients may want to play cards, look at pictures, or reminisce. Some clients receive additional services if they have a sight impairment such as reviewing mail or reading the newspaper. Telephone reassurance is another activity of ElderMatch. This is an ideal activity for our RSVP volunteers who have their own sight problems and cannot drive. They increase their socialization right along with the clients. This program is over 10 years old. Because of this successful collaboration, LSS and RSVP also joined forces to offer respite care to families. Currently our client numbers are small but the impact is life changing for those who are served.

Our RSVP volunteers assist our community members in Access to Care by presenting health information to 2nd graders and coordinating a vision screening program for pre-school children. Our B.A.B.E.S. (Beginning Awareness Basic Education Studies) has been in existence for 11 years. This program is a primary prevention program designed to give children a lifetime of protection from substance abuse. B.A.B.E.S. accomplishes this by assisting young people to develop positive living skills and by providing them with accurate, non-judgmental information about the use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs. This important information is presented in a manner designed to gain the attention of children and to enable them to develop a desire for healthful living and give them the ability to better understand how to protect themselves from alcohol and chemical dependency situations among their peers and within a family structure. B.A.B.E.S. pre-test and post-test scores are evaluated to determine how much of the material the students learned. The teachers and the students are very involved in each presentation. The results indicate that the B.A.B.E.S. program remains highly successful. About 100 children will be provided this health education program. At least 80%

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will increase their knowledge of alcohol abuse and its prevention.

Our RSVP Vision Screening Team is comprised of trained, certified vision screeners. Our partner with this effort is Prevent Blindness Wisconsin. The Vision Screening Team works with the Program Coordinator to schedule all screenings. This past year they screened over 700 pre-school children and 28 of those screened were found to need additional professional services. A RSVP volunteer leads this program and coordinates 5 additional RSVP volunteers in this effort. Our RSVP project would like to replicate this model in other areas to build capacity of the RSVP Project but also to increase capacity for our stations.

Another RSVP effort to improve Access to Care is the RSVP Strong Bones program. The RSVP Director approached the ADRC consortium for Outagamie, Calumet and Waupaca Counties wanting to partner with them to expand this program to the outlying towns in our counties. Working together, we have increased the number of classes by 20%. These classes are low cost and located in the client's neighborhood for easy access. This evidence based program has proven to improve balance, bone density, sleep vitality, arthritis relief, weight reduction, and decrease risk of heart disease and diabetes in the seniors participating. The expansion of this program will result in an additional 150 seniors having access to this service.

Based on the above description, the Fox Cities is a wonderful place to live and work but it has its struggles and is feeling the pain of the nation's economic decline due to the outsourcing of manufacturing jobs over the past few years. Meeting the needs of the seniors and veterans who are homebound is an integral part of maintaining the health of our community and helping those who want to live independently and remain in their own home.

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The management of the RSVP volunteers of RSVP Strong Bones leaders is provided through the station supervisor. The Vision Screening Team and B.A.B.E.S. team are managed through the RSVP office with use of volunteer team leaders. All service hours and reports are sent to the RSVP office to record either by the station supervisor, volunteer leader, or the schools. All training for the volunteers of Making the Ride Happen, ElderMatch, Strong Bones, and Vision Screening is done through the station supervisors. Accreditation is provided by the ADRC for Strong Bones; and Prevent Blindness for the Vision Screeners.

Our infrastructure is supported by six RSVP Advisory Council members. Our Advisory Council consists of three RSVP volunteers and three non RSVP members. The make-up of the members is: one business owner; a provider of direct health care services to older adults; an owner of a home health care agency; the Director of Volunteer Services of local school district; and two members who have retired from the school district. The RSVP Advisory Council has been instrumental in evaluating the services and the position of the RSVP project in our community. The council members have given feedback regarding the management at RSVP stations; marketing ideas and the development of an RSVP marketing plan; making connections to community groups by participating in events that showcase our program.

The most frequent data sources cited in this grant are derived from the Fox Cities L.I.F.E. Studies conducted in 2001, 2005, and 2011, which is a local community needs assessment. L.I.F.E. stands for Leading Indicators for Excellence. The research is completed by staff at University of Wisconsin--Green Bay Center for Public Affairs and the St. Norbert College Strategic Research Institute. The focus areas where we have our heaviest concentration of RSVP volunteers are: *providing transportation

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for senior citizens; ** increasing affordable housing; and ***improving student proficiency in math and reading. The RSVP staff, Advisory Council and RSVP volunteers work to integrate themselves into the fiber of our community. We have strengthened our community in the areas of *building safe and affordable housing for low income individuals (179 clients); **transportation for seniors and veterans (793); and ***tutoring for those children struggling in reading and math (260 students).

In summary, the Volunteer Center of East Central WI and RSVP facilitates strong community relationships and a variety of volunteer opportunities. The Volunteer Center has strong funding relationships, one offering rent--free space since 2003. Our strong economic community partners have played a key role in the effort. This funding supports the matching funds and access to support the RSVP project which includes the Healthy Futures programming.

*Transportation noted in L.I.F.E. Study 2001, Isolation of seniors noted in L.I.F.E. Study 2011),

** (L.I.F.E. Study 2005: affordable housing not kept up with local need ; 62% of leaders rated the region fair or poor for maintaining affordable housing for people with low incomes)

***L.I.F.E. Study 2011: "Third grade students in the Fox Cities area achieved advanced or proficient reading scores at a higher rate than students statewide. However, the percentage of third graders reading at advanced or proficient levels declined every year, from 86% (2006-07) to 83% in the Fox Cities (2009-10)..." The Annie E. Casey Foundation cited in a special KIDS COUNT report that "Reading proficiently by the end of third grade is a crucial marker in a child's educational development. Failure to read proficiently is linked to higher rates of school dropout, which suppresses individual earning potential as well as the nation's competitiveness and general productivity."

Recruitment and Development

RSVP Outagamie assures a high quality experience for its members by developing relationships with

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the RSVP stations. The impact of relationship building is two-fold. The RSVP staff, by working closely with the RSVP stations and knowing the skills, interests and experiences of the volunteers identifies additional opportunities.

With a good working knowledge of the RSVP stations, the RSVP staff also offers volunteer management best practices. The Volunteer Center of East Central Wisconsin has offered a variety of training opportunities to its 90 affiliate non-profit partners over the past 16 years. The Volunteer Center has been a leader in providing such opportunities at local and state conferences, by sharing materials and its resource library, and by developing volunteer management training content reflecting new trends. One example of this is "The Boomers are Here!" lead by the RSVP Director. This workshop highlighted the need for structural changes in the use of volunteers, how to make advertisements appealing to baby boomers, and the motivations of baby boomers along with how they prefer to be recognized. Since that training, more RSVP stations started providing short-term project-oriented opportunities. Our RSVP project strengthened its Special Events Team which helps plan and work at local events, especially those dealing with fundraising. This year's workshops have featured web-based recruitment tools and how to set up an organization's FaceBook page.

Training and technical assistance to volunteer station supervisors is an on-going RSVP service. The RSVP staff meets individually with new volunteer managers. During this station orientation an assessment of its training and technical assistance needs is made. RSVP provides the necessary assistance or finds volunteers who may be able to do so. Regular station training needs have included: how to recruit volunteers; how to write volunteer ads; ways to recognize volunteers; and how to use local venues to promote the need for volunteers. RSVP staff leads training and workshops for volunteer coordinators on both the state (Wisconsin Volunteer Coordinators Association) and local

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(Volunteer Action Council Fox Cities) levels. They also lead a program called "ASK.VolunteerCenter." This is a monthly forum with topics suggested by our local RSVP station supervisors. This small and informal group shares information and takes advantage of the knowledge and experience of the supervisors to troubleshoot concerns common to all.

Previously the RSVP Project held monthly in-services for its RSVP volunteers. At these in-services we discussed upcoming volunteer opportunities. We have also featured non-profit agencies or on a subject of interest to an older population. The sessions also provided socializing opportunities for the volunteers. Due to cutbacks in funding this type of in-service is no longer feasible. We have looked for other agencies and groups to partner with to provide training sessions together. This year RSVP worked together with the mentoring agencies. This past spring the topic was Teen Dating Violence. This fall's topic is "Drugs: What do adults need to learn that kids already know?" These sessions give opportunities to highlight our programs to new people and to educate the public, specifically our volunteers. RSVP has also partnered with the UW-Extension. One speaker shared information about ways to exercise the different parts of the brain to inhibit memory loss. RSVP and the UW-Extension partnered with a local senior housing facility for this program, provided education, and an avenue for the recruitment of new volunteers.

Each prospective volunteer meets with an RSVP staff person to receive an RSVP orientation to share his or her skills and interests, and to document the volunteer's availability for the volunteer work. A background check is completed on each volunteer and additional reference checks are completed for those who visit the homebound. Follow-up contacts with the volunteer and his or her station assure that the placement is a good fit for both.

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RSVP actively promotes itself as a way for older adults to get connected, or re-connected, to their community to address community needs. To advertise opportunities and raise awareness, RSVP uses the Volunteer Center of East Central WI's Volunteer Connections Book; and the websites Volunteer Center, VolunteerMatch, HandsOn Connect, and AARP. We regularly use the Sunday newspaper and two local radio stations for visibility. RSVP also reaches out to the community via volunteer fairs, special events and speaking engagements to community groups and businesses.

The demographic of our local population is Caucasian as is reflected in RSVP. We want to broaden our volunteer base. Several measures have been taken to develop relationships with diverse populations in our area. We attend events highlighting or organized by diverse group and interagency meetings to learn of the community needs facing minorities. We include pictures of minorities in our media advertisements. The region's ethnic makeup is predominately Caucasian (96%) according to the 2010 census. The fastest growing group is the Latino/Hispanic population even though it remains less than 4% of the total population of Outagamie and Calumet counties. Our area has a large population of Laotian and Hmong refugee families as well. Over the past 10 years, RSVP has had one black and one Hispanic volunteer. Otherwise our RSVP volunteers have been primarily Caucasian.

In order to increase this number of non-white and Hispanic volunteers, the RVSP Director is involved with culturally diverse groups, committees and events. The RSVP Director attends the monthly interagency meetings of both the Hispanic and the Hmong service providers and leaders. With these efforts, the director is building relationships with these groups and learning about the challenges of living in a culture different than one's own.

The RSVP Director serves on the planning committee for a state Hmong Conference being held in

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Appleton in October of this year. This work has enabled the RSVP Director to build the relationship with the Hmong elders, learn about the culture and assist in the education of service providers and the general public about cultural similarities and differences. RSVP volunteers are also helping with the planning of this conference.

Our goal is to continue increasing these connections and our understanding in order to make the RSVP project as welcoming as possible to diverse populations. Once these relationships are developed, we plan to recruit members of the Hispanic, Hmong and the African-American communities to help develop a plan to reach potential RSVP members.

RSVP members are provided nametags and t-shirts to wear while volunteering. The largest percentages of new members are recruited by the RSVP volunteers themselves. We have been effective with word of mouth and more direct recruitment activities at volunteer and senior fairs. Additionally, RSVP offers its volunteers leadership roles through Advisory Council participation, special events committee chair positions and advocacy opportunities. Such positions are published in the RSVP monthly newsletter and introduced to volunteers during orientations, personal phone calls, and e-mail blasts. Many of our RSVP volunteers are promoted to leadership positions by people at their own stations.

Our recruitment efforts are year round. Our efforts to retain volunteers consist of sending greeting cards for birthdays, holidays and family events; calling and checking in with inactive volunteers before moving them to inactive status; and inviting them to in-services to learn about a variety of topics. RSVP volunteers are updated through the monthly newsletters, e-mails, and phone calls.

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A year ago, the RSVP Director reached out to area professionals working with veterans and their families. Much knowledge was gained about the needs of veterans and their families but we did not find a partner to share this effort with us. Currently these groups know that we accept and welcome referrals from veterans who want to volunteer. RSVP supports the local veterans' transportation program and has 24 veterans enrolled. Last fall we partnered with a local middle school on a veterans program that featured RSVP veterans who videotaped their stories. The students composed questions that were answered by the veterans and were showcased at the community event.

Each year we celebrate and honor our RSVP volunteers with an appreciation program. Station representatives, Advisory Council members, community leaders, government officials and donors are invited to this event. This is a great way to review and reflect on the service provided in the past year. The volunteers are honored for their impact, their hours served and years as a member of RSVP. Last year's program coincided with Senior Corps Week. The County Executive and a Congressman came to read declarations to the volunteers. This year Senior Corps week was moved to May so we planned a Flash Mob highlighting the need for volunteer drivers in the "Making the Ride Happen" program. Several RSVP volunteers participated in our Flash Mob at the local senior center and volunteers came just to see it. It highlighted our RSVP volunteers and was a great collaboration with the local senior center, "Making the Ride Happen", staff and volunteers.

RSVP staff submits nominations for volunteer recognition to local and national volunteer award programs as part of our overall recognition plan. RSVP members have received honors through our largest and most visible award program- Celebrating Our Volunteers. The Volunteer Center has served on the steering committee since its inception in 1998. Also on the committee are other volunteers and philanthropic community leaders.

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In 2000, two RSVP volunteers were highlighted for their contributions. Marge won for helping RSVP develop a tutoring program at a local elementary school and Tony helped organize a kitchen and a team of volunteers who helped make meals at a local senior center. Both volunteers were awarded \$5,000 that they shared with our Volunteer Center's RSVP program. Long before the term "volunteer leaders" became popular our RSVP program had such people. In 2001, Rita won the health care award earning another \$5,000 for her service to our local health clinic for low income residents.

In 2002, Sam won for volunteering in the schools and was given another \$5,000 award. Sam was instrumental in recruiting more RSVP tutors as he regularly shared his volunteer story publicly along with the RSVP Director in an effort to recruit volunteers. In 2004, Erno and Anna, a husband and wife RSVP team, won for countless volunteer efforts with the Appleton Police Department, Habitat for Humanity, and the local senior center.

In 2008, the RSVP BABES Alcohol and other drug abuse prevention program won for their education message to 2nd graders in private and public schools about drug and alcohol prevention message. RSVP BABES alcohol and other drug abuse prevention program was also selected as a Points of Light Foundation "Daily Point of Light" winner in 2004.

In 2001, 2005 and 2007 the Volunteer Center also earned awards for local partnerships with Thrivent Financial, Local 400 Steamfitters Union, and Kimberly-Clark Corporation.

Additional RSVP recognition occurred when Goodwill Industries named RSVP the 2005 VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Partner of the Year. RSVP volunteers work closely with citizens

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in preparing their tax returns. Making clients aware of the Earned Income Tax Credit was a major contribution.

The RSVP staff attends many webinars using such vehicles as VolunteerMatch, HandsOn Connect, Volunteer Wisconsin, CNCS and Tech Soup. RSVP Staff and the Volunteer Center Executive Director are actively involved in the state organization of volunteer coordinators and their annual conference. The staff attends every year and, at times, has presented programs. We also gain training experiences through our memberships in the Fox Cities Women in Management, Fox Cities Community Council, Fox Valley Senior Resource Network and the Toastmasters organization. The Volunteer Center/RSVP staff also keeps abreast of community initiatives through their affiliation with twenty local organizations.

In summary, there are many opportunities provided for volunteers, staff and RSVP station personnel, to learn and develop their skills. Training and technical assistance to volunteer coordinators is an on-going service we provide to all of our stations. Regular training topics have included how to: recruit volunteers, write volunteer ads, recognize volunteers and use local venues to promote the needs for volunteers.

Program Management

RSVP Outagamie offers a high quality program by providing clear expectations for the volunteers and stations by regularly communicating with both groups, by discussing feedback from the stations, accurately collecting data, and utilizing RSVP volunteer leaders and Ambassadors appropriately. One full time Program Director and one half time Assistant along with our sponsor manage this strong RSVP program.

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The expectations are communicated to the prospective volunteers through an individual meeting prior to joining RSVP. The prospective volunteer completes an application and receives an RSVP Handbook during their orientation. Once the person has selected the opportunity, an RSVP Staff person contacts the station to verify that the opening still exists and that the potential volunteer meets their needs. A criminal background check using both the Department of Justice and the state Consolidated Court Automation Programs database is completed. The sexual offender database, both on the national and state level, is searched for each volunteer. Those wanting to become volunteer drivers also undergo a Caregiver Background check. RSVP volunteers interested in home visitation sign an in-home care agreement with Lutheran Social Services and have reference checks completed.

RSVP expectations are communicated to its RSVP stations using the station Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Because station supervisors turn over frequently, the RSVP Director visits with each new supervisor to review expectations and the MOU. This station orientation takes about 45 minutes. Its purpose is to ensure the RSVP volunteers receive an orientation for their assignment; work in a safe environment; have access to their supervisor; receive a written job description; and are aware of civil rights, accessibility, and non-discriminatory regulations.

Regular communication occurs with the RSVP volunteers through the monthly RSVP newsletters, phone calls, emails, training, station visits and letters. Every six months, the RSVP staff conducts a review of volunteer activity. If a volunteer has not recorded his or her hours, a contact is made to find out why. Depending on the reason for inactivity, the RSVP staff will determine the appropriate action -- make the volunteer inactive, work with the station supervisor to correct a situation, or assist the volunteer in finding a new placement.

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Communication with the RSVP stations takes many forms. The station receives periodic electronic newsletters from the Volunteer Center of East Central WI and RSVP. New station supervisors meet with the RSVP staff for an orientation. Many of the RSVP stations use the HandsOn Connect database for recruitment of volunteers outside of RSVP members. RSVP staff provide the training and on-going support for this recruitment tool.

RSVP uses the Fox Cities L.I.F.E. Study results to determine community needs. Partnerships with those stations who are addressing these needs are established. If it is a new endeavor, many times RSVP will play a role in the planning for the program which will address the particular community need. The Fox Cities is very fortunate to have a large number of social service agencies. Our community is very generous and locally supports many social services endeavors such as the homeless shelters; food pantries; thrift stores; and a program that provides funding to people who need help. RSVP collaborates with our programming for impact stations. The Appleton Area School District, Habitat for Humanity and ReStore, "Making the Ride Happen", Lutheran Social Services are among those that RSVP participates in the on-going training of volunteers, and has a leadership role. The Sponsor, Advisory Council members and RSVP Staff also make site visits to keep channels of communication open.

RSVP assesses project performance in a number of ways using several indicators. We receive the bi-annual client satisfaction forms from "ElderMatch" and "Making the Ride Happen." Test and survey results are reviewed at the reading and the math tutoring Council meetings. Because of time constraints RSVP rotates surveying the volunteers and the stations each year. Last year we surveyed all RSVP members as to satisfaction with program, staff, placement, orientation, training, and recognition. There have been times when RSVP has assisted in surveying selected volunteers to assist

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stations in identifying areas that need attention.

The Community Stakeholders Assessment of RSVP Grantees was conducted in 2011 by the RSVP Advisory Council. The complete document is on file at the Wisconsin Corporation for National Service State Office. The primary conclusion was that the RSVP Program needs more marketing and promotion. The Council saw that citizens were not aware of RSVP or all of its benefits of membership. An RSVP marketing plan was developed by the Advisory Council. Since April of 2011, we have increased community presentations and placed more information on the RSVP pages on the Volunteer Center of East Central WI website. The RVSP Director is in public speaking training through the local Toastmasters organization. The marketing plan continues to be reviewed and great strides have been made in the past year: RSVP has had Public Service Announcements on two radio stations, an article on Baby Boomers in the local newspaper, a video on the local newspaper website, and an article in the "Fox Cities" magazine. The RSVP staff and the Executive Director were quoted in these widely distributed local publications.

Accurate data collection is helped by the use of the web-based Volunteer Reporter developed and supported by Volunteer Software. Our program has found this the most affordable and accurate management of volunteer data. Volunteers can enter their hours and have them verified by the station supervisors using the Web Assistant. Several stations send their RSVP reported hours to our office. Most volunteers email their hours to us. These hours are compared against the station reports for verification. All hour reports are saved electronically and hard copies are in a locked file. The reports generated from Volunteer Reporter have been distributed to the RSVP Advisory Council to review and discuss if areas need further action. Volunteer Reporter has developed their software so that their reports are in alignment with the requirements of the Corporation of National and

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Community Service. This has assured accurate record reporting on behalf of our RSVP project.

Other evidence that demonstrates the accomplishments are the awards that RSVP has received. Some of these were mentioned earlier in the grant and include Boys and Girls Club "Lights On" award, Goodwill Industries "VITA Agency Partner" award, the Daniel E Spaulding "Education Award" for RSVP's work in the schools with its program "Project Young Minds." This award is highly publicized in our community.

The Volunteer Center's Executive Director manages the resources that RSVP receives. The RVSP Director and Volunteer Center look for new ideas for obtaining in-kind donations. All in-kind donations are tracked and recorded. All financial information is entered into QuickBooks and reports are generated as needed.

All expenses are submitted with a receipt as proof of payment. The accountant and Finance Committee reviews and presents financial records to the Volunteer Center board. The account for the Volunteer Center and RSVP are recorded separately. A financial audit or a review is completed annually.

Our organizational structure starts with the Volunteer Center of East Central WI as our sponsor. Its mission is to develop, coordinate, and promote volunteerism that addresses community needs in Outagamie, Winnebago, and Calumet counties. The RSVP project perfectly aligns with this mission. The Volunteer Center has been in existence since 1996. It receives wide support throughout the Fox Cities. The area's largest companies are financial supporters of long standing. They include the Kimberly-Clark Corporation, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, and SECURA Insurance. The largest

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area newspaper, The Post-Crescent, not only financially supports the Volunteer Center, it publishes a weekly volunteer column and volunteer features. The local radio stations run PSAs frequently. RSVP builds public awareness through television PSAs, radio, newspaper, and periodicals geared toward mature adults; involvement in community groups; agencies; health and volunteer fairs; and public speaking. Many times the volunteers themselves invite us to speak to other groups to which they belong.

The Volunteer Center has a relationship with 60 area businesses that have requested assistance to develop their Employee Volunteer Programs. This relationship also helps RSVP as we can use these contacts in the recruitment of newly retired people.

The Volunteer Center Executive Director meets with potential funders to discuss how they might support our work. Grant requests are submitted to potential funders throughout the year. RSVP members participate in the Volunteer Center's fund-raiser called "Human Race" and an event called "Celebrity Waiter." Sponsors are sought to offset the costs of entertainment and gifts at the Annual RSVP Appreciation Event.

In our Other Focus Areas category, our partnerships with the Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity, Rebuilding Together Fox Valley, and the Fox Cities Housing Partnership meet the criteria for the Economic Opportunity Focus Area. RSVP volunteers work on new or rehabilitated housing units for low income individuals, families, or people with disabilities. Both Habitat for Humanity and Housing Partnership have developed specialized crews for the senior volunteers. They both have included a social component to build rapport with the volunteers. Habitat for Humanity in particular has a history of moving interested volunteers into leadership positions. In this way they retain their

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volunteers by giving them new skills and new roles.

The Education Focus Area is addressed by math and reading tutor volunteers in our elementary schools. This makes an appropriate activity to highlight in the Other Focus Area Performance Category. The smaller area school systems are also supported by the RSVP program. In fact, The Chilton Tutoring Tigers initially started with the help of RSVP. The Chilton Schools are located in Calumet County. RSVP has been a partner with the Appleton School's "United for Reading Success" tutoring program for 14 of its 16 years of operation. RSVP was their program's top volunteer recruiter for many years. The RSVP Director serves on both the Reading and the Math Achievement Partnership "MAP" Advisory Councils. These groups consider the schools to be served; benchmarks for program success; and recruiting strategies and ways to show appreciation to volunteers.

The Capacity Building Focus Area is included as RSVP has been successful in recruiting retired professionals who are willing to share their expertise and leadership to the non-profit agencies associated with RSVP. Our goal is to increase our programming in this area as the requests for professional services from our stations is increasing.

RSVP has been a member of the local "Volunteer Organizations Aiding in Disaster (VOAD)" for over three years. Our role in time of disaster is to coordinate a "Volunteer Reception Center"(VRC) to process spontaneous community volunteers. RSVP has involved several community partners and experts in the development of the center. Training our RSVP volunteers to staff the VRC is our next step. We have started recruiting RSVP volunteers for the center and by third year of this grant plan to have fully trained to respond in a disaster.

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In summary, RSVP is a well managed program; offering a wide range of activities with even more opportunities on the horizon.

Organizational Capability

RSVP Outagamie County has a proven track record in managing volunteer programs. The Volunteer Center and its RSVP staff have over 53 combined years of experience in volunteer management. The Volunteer Center has managed the federal grant for 13 years with no delinquencies, with satisfactory reviews and had five successful monitoring visits by the Wisconsin State CNCS Office. Over the past 13 years nearly 1000 volunteers have been recruited for the RSVP project. Our main focus areas have been in place for many of those years: elementary schools (tutoring, mentoring, providing drug use prevention, and after school programs), and helping seniors to remain in their homes (ElderMatch, senior transportation, and repairing homes for low income seniors). Normally our volunteers serve about 50,000 hours annually. In 2011-2012, they contributed 59,000 service hours. Since April of 2012, RSVP started downsizing due to the grant reduction and to be in compliance with the new RSVP regulations.

Our strongest resource has always been our sponsor, The Volunteer Center of East Central WI. This organization continues to be a well run, fiscally sound agency which has served our community for 16 years. The Volunteer Center's Executive Director started the center and has remained in this position. For the RSVP project she has secured matching funds, facilitated financial oversight, managed staff, and provided valuable guidance. The Volunteer Center with a 12 member Board of Directors partners with 90 non-profit agencies, and manages the following programs: youth, corporate employee volunteer, community volunteer matching and the RSVP project.

Congressman Reid Ribble shares his comments about the strength of the Volunteer Center, "As the

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sponsor of this federally funded program for the last thirteen years, the Volunteer Center of East Central Wisconsin (VCECW) has demonstrated its ability to administer this program and will continue to do so going forward. The nature the of the Volunteer Center's community work and relationships to volunteers and donors are what defines the group's success and I am confident that VCECW will continue to make this RSVP program strong. VCECW maintains a good reputation within my district and has adhered to all rules and regulations in operating this program. In particular, RSVP volunteers have had a positive impact in education and in assisting with transportation needs in this community."

The Board of Directors is involved in all programs but primarily directs the fund-raising efforts, community outreach work and marketing. Valuable matching funds which support the RSVP grant have been generated by the Board's coordination of four annual fund raising activities: "Celebrity Waiter," "The Human Race," the Kimberly-Clark Charity Golf Outing, and a mail appeal. One of the best partnerships for RSVP is the donation of in-kind office space. Because of the Volunteer Center's partnerships and its reputation, 10 years ago they moved into rent free office space owned by Community First Credit Union. This has been a wonderful relationship as the credit union supports many of the same community efforts as the Volunteer Center. This relationship goes beyond rent free space as the Volunteer Center recruits volunteers for the Community First Fox Cities Marathon, has shared media coverage, and supports their financial literacy programs. The partnership with Community First Union Credit is exemplary, but in reality the Volunteer Center has similar relationships with other businesses, places of worship, and community groups. The Volunteer Center's relationships with its non-profit partners assist the RSVP project in keeping up with new initiatives and volunteer opportunities for RSVP.

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Both the Volunteer Center of East Central WI and its RSVP project have a track record of success. In 1997, the Volunteer Center was part of the President's Summit on Volunteering that took place in Washington D.C. As a result of this summit, "America's Promise" was formed with 5 goals which included mentoring and opportunities for students to give back in their local communities. The Volunteer Center realized that there was no mentoring program that was recruiting area business volunteers to work closely with their neighboring schools. The Volunteer Center took the initiative to develop a school-based mentoring program. After coordinating this program from 1997 to 1999, the Volunteer Center was approached by the mentoring agencies with an interest in taking over the coordination. Our organization transitioned the program to area mentoring agencies, evidencing a community need for volunteer mentors in a school-based setting.

Because of the success of this initiative, the Volunteer Center planned and coordinated what is still the largest mentoring summit ever held in the state of Wisconsin. In 1999, the Volunteer Center and RSVP invited Retired General Colin Powell to speak to a gathering of community members, agencies, businesses, mentors, and mentees on the value of mentoring and giving back to the community. Over 4,500 people attended this event. The marketing and the media coverage of this event helped in the education and volunteer recruitment for over 25 regional groups. Over 500 mentors were recruited. This summit helped in promoting the Volunteer Center and RSVP.

The RSVP stations represent a wide variety of non-profit agencies. They include some of the 90 non-profit partners of the Volunteer Center and several others that are not affiliated. When RSVP volunteers request to serve in a station that is not affiliated with the Volunteer Center the RSVP staff makes contact to determine the appropriateness and if found to be so follows up with a visit and a Memorandum of Understanding.

Narratives

The RSVP Staff consists of a full-time Director and a part-time Assistant. Both are full time employees of the Volunteer Center of East Central WI. The RSVP Director oversees the grant and its program requirements, does community outreach, oversees our school volunteers, and provides presentation, trains volunteer managers, coordinates volunteer training, and chairs the Advisory Council. The Assistant Director oversees the "Making the Ride Happen" senior transportation program, volunteer hours data management, volunteer orientations, and using non-grant supported time, assists in fund-raising events.

The RSVP Advisory Council meets at least six times a year. It has been instrumental in advertising the RSVP project. At times members fill in for the RSVP Director at community events. Most recently it developed a broader marketing plan which was noted in the program evaluation (Community Stakeholder Assessment for RSVP Grantees) as a gap in program strength. The Advisory Council also reviews survey data of RSVP volunteer satisfaction regarding placements and the services provided them.

The RSVP project has a RSVP Policy Book that complements those of the Volunteer Center of East Central WI. This book has policies dealing with the RSVP hours reports, transportation and its reimbursement, compensation for services, non-displacement of employed workers, non discrimination, prohibition of religious, labor, anti-labor activities; RSVP safety assurances at stations, volunteer eligibility; allowable cost reimbursements, responsibilities of RSVP station, RSVP project sponsor responsibilities and volunteer background checks. The RSVP Volunteer Handbook includes this information and is given to all volunteers at their orientation. The RSVP stations are also made aware of the policies at the station orientation and via the written MOU.

Narratives

Performance measurement and assessment is supported by regular data collection including reports from the RSVP stations. Each June, our member school districts publish test scores of the tutored students and the non-tutored students. The RSVP Director is a member of the tutoring councils. RSVP volunteers are also represented on these councils and can provide feedback. The senior transportation program is monitored through client feedback and tabulations of clients served and rides provided. Monthly reports are shared which also reflects clients destination, numbers of rides and number of clients. "ElderMatch," a program of Lutheran Social Services, distributes client surveys. Building of houses for low income people is measured by the number of people served. This data collection is handled by the housing stations and reported to the RSVP Director for review on a regular basis.

Overall the Volunteer Center and the RSVP program work very cooperatively to meet the volunteer needs in our community. The RSVP program personalizes the services that the volunteer receives and makes sure that the placements are appropriate for the volunteer. We offer high quality opportunities and match volunteer's interests. The staff provides volunteer management training to non-profit agencies which stresses the importance of making the environment welcoming and supportive for volunteers. This high level of service, flexibility and training are maintained by the strength of the long standing collaborative working relationship between the Volunteer Center and RSVP.

Other

n/a

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

n/a