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Executive Summary

The primary focus area for RSVP of North Central Iowa (NCI) is education. The majority of volunteers serve in elementary and middle schools mentoring children and tutoring students who are not reading at grade level.

Reading Buddies and Reading Coaches spend approximately one hour per week with students at 18 elementary and middle schools in North Central Iowa. Volunteers use guided reading strategies to help students improve their literacy skills and reading level, focusing on fluency and comprehension. By the end of the school year, 163 (65%) elementary school students and 33 (55%) middle school students who work with an RSVP volunteer will improve their reading by one grade level or more.

RSVP of NCI will serve approximately 249 unduplicated volunteers during the 2013-2014 program year. The program is sponsored by North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) in Mason City, Iowa. NIACC serves as a major educational, cultural, and economic development partner for the North Central Iowa region. The College collaborates with business, industry, health care facilities, school districts, and surrounding communities to deliver college credit and non-credit courses.

The CNCS investment of \$51,447 in federal funds to manage the program will be supplemented by approximately \$44,000 in local match funding.

Strengthening Communities

RSVP of NCI is sponsored by NIACC, which is located in Mason City. RSVP serves Cerro Gordo, Hancock, Winnebago, and Worth counties in North Central Iowa. All four counties can be described as non-metropolitan and rural in nature. Mason City is a micropolitan community in Cerro Gordo County, located midway between Minneapolis, Minnesota and Des Moines, Iowa. Clear Lake, also in

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Cerro Gordo County, is a popular tourism area with a large recreational lake that attracts many visitors for fishing and water sports. Mason City and Clear Lake have been referred to as the mini-Minneapolis and St. Paul of Iowa, serving as the major hub for North Central Iowa business, industry, retail, education, entertainment, culture, and health care services.

Total population for the four-county service area is 73,956. Cerro Gordo County has the highest population with 44,151 residents and Worth County has the lowest, with 7,598 residents. The four counties served by RSVP are predominantly Caucasian -- the 2011 population estimates indicate a range of 96% to 98% Caucasian, and 93% Caucasian for the State of Iowa. The average median household income for the four counties from 2006-2010 was \$45,900, which is slightly lower than the State of Iowa median income of \$48,872 and the national income of \$51,914. The average percentage of people living below the poverty line in all four counties was 11%, which is comparable to 11% for the state and slightly lower than the national percentage of 14%. Total land area of the four counties is 1,940 square miles. The population density indicates an average of 38 people per square mile. Population is spread out with much room to live, work, and play. The majority of the land is utilized for crops and livestock. (Demographic statistics were taken from the U.S. Census Bureau website.)

The North Central Iowa regional economy revolves around agriculture, manufacturing, health care, education, and social services. Non-profit agencies such as, but not limited to, the Community Kitchen of North Iowa, Habitat for Humanity, Mason City Youth Task Force, the United Way of North Central Iowa, Crisis Intervention Service, and two homeless shelters work together to meet community needs. Service clubs such as Rotary, Lions, and Kiwanis are active throughout all four counties and the spirit of volunteering is vibrant.

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The RSVP service area has not been exempt from the economic downturn over the past few years. In all four counties, many companies and businesses have either laid off employees or closed. In the Mason City Community School District alone, the percentage of K-12 students eligible for the Free and Reduced-Priced Lunch Program jumped from 33% in 2005 to 45% in 2011. Local economic development entities report some recent growth, but admit that it is slow. According to the Iowa Workforce Information Network, unemployment is lower in all four counties in 2012 than it was in 2011. In Cerro Gordo County, the rate was 6.3% in August of 2011 and 5.8% in August of 2012. The rates were fairly consistent throughout 2011 in all four counties.

Overall, education in the area is strong -- the majority of school districts have active Parent Teacher Associations, continuing education opportunities for teachers, and many engaged parents; however, K-12 school districts struggle as the population declines in North Central Iowa. Many districts face the challenges of whole-grade sharing, school consolidation, and loss of jobs. According to the NIACC Area II Market Share Report, the number of high school students in the NIACC service area, which overlaps with the RSVP service area is dwindling. In 2009, there were 1,537 graduating high school students in North Iowa; in 2012 there will be 1,382 high school graduates. During those four years, there has been a steady decline. In fact, the Iowa Department of Education projects a decline in enrollment in half of the school districts RSVP works with between 2011 and 2016.

As student numbers decline, schools receive less funding. This reduction in funding results in layoffs, fewer paraprofessionals and teachers, larger class sizes, and extremely tight budgets. In order to continue meeting the needs of students in North Central Iowa, schools have consolidated or entered into whole-grade sharing agreements. Often, the middle school will be in one community and the

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high school in the other community. Although these consolidations help meet funding needs, they can create new challenges, such as, but not limited to, transportation problems for parents and long bus rides for students. Schools continue to work through challenges as they arise to find the best way to educate students in North Central Iowa.

Schools also face another challenge: students who struggle to read proficiently. Statistics on the Iowa.gov website reveal that while Iowa led the nation in education in the early 1990s, the state is no longer in the top half; instead, Iowa ranks 31st. According to the Iowa Department of Education's latest statistics from 2007-2009, 21% of 4th grade and 26% of 8th grade students in the RSVP service area were not reading at grade level. School personnel and government officials want to eliminate this problem. In fact, recent Iowa legislation states, "Beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, parents of students who cannot demonstrate adequate literacy skills at the end of 3rd grade will be given a choice: enroll their children in an intensive summer reading program or have them repeat the grade."

The need for literacy tutoring has been felt across the service area by school districts that are rapidly trying to find ways to meet state and federal requirements, sometimes, with less staff. RSVP fulfills this need by providing volunteers who help students who are academically challenged. RSVP volunteers serving as Reading Buddies in elementary schools and Reading Coaches in middle schools provide additional resources to students to close the gap and achieve grade-level reading proficiency. Teacher-identified students benefit from reading with an adult beyond what is available during class time and RSVP volunteers provide that benefit.

The Primary Focus Area of RSVP of NCI is education. When the Reading Buddy and Reading Coach

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programs were designed, RSVP staff tapped into the experience and guidance of school principals to design effective and successful programs. Still today, the program has a strong relationship with 18 elementary and middle schools -- RSVP staff meet with teachers and principals at least twice each school year, and have open communication via email and phone calls throughout the year.

At the beginning of each school year, principals, teachers, and RSVP staff meet to discuss current needs, schedule changes, best practices, and concerns. For example, this fall we discussed concerns voiced by a teacher regarding a volunteer who was bringing in his iPad at the end of the last school year. The director explained to the volunteer that this was not appropriate and that the school has requested volunteers not bring in electronics, and instead focus on reading activities using materials provided by the teachers. Often at these meetings, school officials will communicate the need for more volunteers, additional programs, and new program ideas.

Volunteers begin volunteering the first week of October, per school request, allowing students and teachers to settle into their new environment, establish a routine, and conduct reading assessments. At the end of every school year, RSVP surveys all teachers and principals. Program staff members have made procedural changes and implemented suggestions provided by teachers and principals through these surveys. School personnel continually tell RSVP staff how much they value the volunteers and that "they couldn't do it without them."

The relationship between RSVP volunteers and the schools is also strong. Kick-off meetings and trainings are held at all partnering schools. Teachers and principals assist with providing an orientation and training for new volunteers so they feel comfortable working with struggling readers in today's school setting. School personnel provide volunteers with guidance on how to tutor children,

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assurance that they are having a positive impact on the students, and praise for their service. By having school personnel partner with RSVP staff, these meetings are meaningful and productive for volunteers. Open communication is a key factor in the success of the RSVP programs in area schools.

The majority of RSVP volunteers in North Central Iowa tutor elementary and middle school students in reading. Teachers identify students with the greatest need, who are most at risk of not succeeding in school, and who would benefit from working with an RSVP volunteer. Depending on the school and grade level, students come from Reading or Language Arts class (not other subjects) or study hall to work with volunteers. They spend anywhere from 15-60 minutes per day together. Students generally receive one hour of tutoring per week. Volunteers focus on the needs of each individual student. In the elementary program, Reading Buddies work on letter identification, sight words, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. In the middle school program, Reading Coaches help students develop their comprehension skills by discussing the book and asking questions, reviewing at the end of each chapter, and summarizing the main points. Volunteers are trained to use guided reading strategies, which are proven to be successful, to assist students with the development of literacy skills and reading techniques. As a result of this extra attention, students' reading scores and grades typically improve.

Two additional service activities in the Education Focus Area are Pen Pals and Breakfast Buddies. RSVP is implementing a new Pen Pal Program during the 2012-2013 school year. Volunteers will be paired with 4th and 5th grade students who will correspond through letter writing from November to April. In May, volunteers and students will meet at a Pen Pal party. Teachers will incorporate the letter writing into their curriculum as a way to develop literacy skills. The program will allow students to read and write, work on penmanship, and develop a relationship with a caring adult.

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Breakfast Buddies serve as mentors at the school-sponsored breakfast. With many working parents, some children prepare for the day by themselves, prepare with the help of a sibling, or bounce from home, to daycare, to school. Most of these children eat breakfast at school and some do not see an adult until arriving at school. One principal reports that when she arrives in the morning, there are students waiting. Breakfast Buddies mentor students, engaging students one-on-one and in small group settings. The program provides a positive and nurturing environment each morning, as the volunteers visit with and listen to children while they eat breakfast, so when school starts the students are prepared for their day and ready to learn.

The Search Institute states numerous studies have reported that positive connections to other adults contribute to better wellbeing for youth across a variety of behavioral and psychological outcomes. It goes on to say that relationships with adults in school settings also provide valuable sources of adult-youth connections. Reading Coaches, Reading Buddies, Pen Pals, and Breakfast Buddies all provide another positive relationship with adults for students in North Central Iowa.

According to Jim Trelease, author of the best-seller "The Read-Aloud Handbook," students who read most often read the best, achieve the most, and stay in school the longest. Unfortunately, the opposite is true for students who don't read often and, without practice, they cannot become better readers.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation states that students who do not read proficiently by 3rd grade are four times more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school. Trelease also states that reading aloud is the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading. According to the Family Literacy Foundation, studies prove that the most important thing adults can do in preparing young children for success in school is to read aloud with them.

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Unfortunately, this does not always happen in today's society or in North Central Iowa. With parents' and children's busy schedules, reading time is often replaced with extra-curricular activities or parents working long hours. The correlation could be made that this lack of reading time with young children is creating struggling readers in elementary schools.

In addition, Laura Robb, Director of Language Arts and Curriculum Coordinator for the Powhatan School in Boyce, Virginia, states that new research supports the idea of reading instruction from preschool through middle school. Students learn to read at different ages and not all students master reading in elementary school. Many need more practice with their reading skills after completing elementary school, as well as a continued emphasis and instruction on interpreting and comprehending what they read. One reason some middle school students continue to struggle with reading is due to the fact that reading instruction stops after the elementary grades. In middle school, class time is spent covering large amounts of new material leaving little to no time for reading instruction. Trying to keep up with the rigors of middle school, struggling readers fall farther behind, which leads to greater frustration. In fact, when students flounder in middle school, the likelihood that they will drop out of school dramatically increases.

The Iowa Department of Education reports, in the RSVP service area, approximately one quarter of 4th grade students are not reading at proficiency level, which means they are not succeeding in school. Locally, RSVP volunteers are needed to help students improve their reading skills. Reading Buddy and Reading Coach volunteer programs were developed based on this community need and the type of service activity required to resolve it.

Teachers identify students who are not reading at grade level and who would benefit from extra

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reading time with an adult. Trained volunteers spend one hour per week at the school tutoring students. Volunteers work with individual students providing one-on-one attention and tutoring. On a weekly basis, students generally receive an hour of extra reading time with an RSVP Volunteer. Depending on the grade level, volunteers listen to, read with, and coach students with their reading. Teachers will conduct literacy testing in the fall and spring and report to RSVP student literacy scores. In area elementary schools, 150 Reading Buddies will donate 2,000 hours of reading tutoring and in the middle schools, 40 Reading Coaches will donate 700 hours of reading tutoring. By the end of the school year, 65% of elementary school students (163) and 55% of middle school students (33) who work with an RSVP volunteer will improve their reading by one grade level or more. Students who work with an RSVP volunteer will improve their academic performance in literacy.

Each year, RSVP of NCI incorporates special events or programming efforts with a military focus into its offerings and will continue with this practice. On the 10th anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center, RSVP volunteers and other members of the community folded pocket flags that were mailed to soldiers on the front lines. Recently, a volunteer received a letter from the soldier who received his flag and they have started corresponding through letter writing.

This spring, RSVP will include initiatives focused on veterans or military families with the Reading Buddy or Reading Coach programs. Reading Coach volunteers and students will host a supply drive to gather items needed by soldiers serving overseas. Items will be mailed to the Iowa Troop Pantry, a non-profit organization that specializes in caring for military personnel during deployment. At the Pen Pal parties, volunteers and students will write thank you letters to members of the 1133rd Transportation Company that is stationed in Mason City.

Recruitment and Development

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Volunteers are recruited through several well-designed processes. RSVP of NCI uses public and inclusive methods of recruitment and adheres to its non-discrimination policy. The program markets volunteer opportunities through its own newsletter, press releases to all area newspapers, radio announcements, varying faith community bulletin announcements, and public places such as, senior centers, restaurants, libraries, and post offices. In July 2012, RSVP co-sponsored the Senior Fair in Mason City, which was geared toward residents 55 and older. Information about the program and volunteer opportunities was available at the RSVP booth. The Director and Coordinator travel to partnering communities to host "Coffee Chats" for potential, new, and current volunteers. Often, veteran volunteers are the best recruiters for new volunteers, as their positive experience speaks volumes to potential volunteers. RSVP also utilizes the NIACC Continuing Education Course Catalog, which is mailed to all area residents in the RSVP service area. In addition, the Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) at NIACC has a target audience similar to RSVP's. One focus of LLI is service and purposeful living in the second half of life. RSVP taps into LLI's communication to its members, such as the course catalog and recruitment event, to find new volunteers.

Compatible matches, based on volunteer characteristics and talents, lead to satisfaction in volunteer placement. When volunteers complete the RSVP enrollment form, they include information about their skills, interests, and professional background, as well as what they want to gain from their volunteer experience. Some volunteers already have experience working with students, like retired teachers and school personnel, while others have retired from a different type of career and want to try something new. One volunteer who worked his whole life at a manufacturing facility came to RSVP to do something completely different. At first, he was anxious about working with students, but now he talks about how rewarding it is and how much he enjoys being around youth.

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Pertinent information is provided at orientations and trainings so volunteers understand the impact they have on the students with whom they work. The program develops volunteer skills by providing them with insights to work with today's students. When volunteers join RSVP, they watch a DVD and receive a training manual that outlines tips and strategies for mentoring and tutoring students in reading. Teachers and administrators also provide volunteers with tactics for working with children and assisting with literacy development. RSVP is designed to promote an ethic of service and civic responsibility by working with youth. When seniors work with young people, they are revitalized. They have a positive effect on the students and are helpful to the teachers. They themselves feel positive and rewarded. This type of activity is good for the school and the community.

Volunteers often come to RSVP as established and respected leaders in their communities. By equipping them with the proper information, volunteers continue to build new skills, particularly in the areas of literacy and mentoring. RSVP provides leadership opportunities by incorporating volunteers on the Advisory Council. Their input and feedback about program development, improvement, and expansion is invaluable. Typically, some volunteers rise to the surface as leaders and are utilized for their talents, such as volunteer recruitment and help with days of service projects.

Living a purposeful life is at the heart of all RSVP of NCI volunteer experiences. Opportunities offered by RSVP are meaningful and rewarding because they allow volunteers to develop skills, experience multi-generational relationships with area students, enhance relationships with other volunteers, and provide service to their communities. Based on surveys completed by RSVP volunteers, the experiences are fulfilling, meaningful, and rewarding. It is evident from the surveys that their quality of life is enhanced by working with young students.

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At RSVP of NCI, we consider ourselves lucky due to the nature of our volunteer opportunities -- year after year and volunteer after volunteer, we hear: 1) Individuals volunteer with RSVP because they want to help students and enjoy working with youth 2) They understand the importance of children succeeding in school and realize that reading is a critical component of success 3) They want to be of service to others and give back to their community. Any new program changes or expansions will continue to enhance the quality of life for volunteers by keeping them active and engaged in meaningful projects that improve their community. The program utilizes a comprehensive system of recruiting, training, retaining, and recognizing quality volunteers. The RSVP newsletter, launched in November 2011, helps in all four areas by communicating to current and potential volunteers and friends of RSVP, such as personnel from stations, funding organizations, and community partners, all of whom share names of potential volunteers with RSVP staff.

Teachers from local schools also play a significant role in recruiting, training, retaining, and recognizing volunteers. Teachers and administrators encourage people to become RSVP volunteers, participate in and contribute to volunteer trainings, and provide volunteers ongoing recognition throughout the year. They make a concerted effort to acknowledge volunteer efforts, to praise their work, and to pass along positive feedback from their students.

Training is a significant part of why RSVP of NCI is successful. All volunteers placed as Reading Buddies and Reading Coaches receive training before serving. RSVP staff travel to all schools and hold Kick-off meetings, along with principals and teachers, for new and returning volunteers. New volunteers receive a handbook which details the importance of reading, statistics about the impact of illiteracy, and characteristics about the age of students they'll be working with. The handbook details the research-based Guided Reading Approach, which breaks down, step-by-step, how to help children

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learn to read. Each handbook comes with a "tip card," that includes simple approaches to help students when they struggle with reading, and provides sample questions to help them develop their comprehension skills. A DVD is shown at each Kick-off meeting. Reading Buddies watch "Literacy Leaps," a practical guide to help students learning to read. Reading Coaches watch "Learns Tutoring: Reading Comprehension," which trains tutors on how to lead discussions with students. Following each video, discussion is held about what their volunteer experience will be like and volunteers are able to ask questions. RSVP also provides an annual training for all volunteers. Recent topics have included "10 Ways to Positively Impact a Child's Life" and "Living a Purposeful Life." During the 2012-2013 school year, RSVP is partnering with librarians from a local library to provide training on literacy. The RSVP service area is 97% Caucasian, and the current RSVP volunteer population is 98% Caucasian. Individuals with limited English speaking skills would not be an appropriate match for literacy tutoring; however, RSVP welcomes all individuals and would work with them to find a different volunteer opportunity outside of the Reading Buddy and Reading Coach programs.

RSVP of NCI, along with its Advisory Council, has a goal of building relationships with veteran and military populations in North Central Iowa. We would like to add a member to the Council who is connected to the military community and could help us reach out to those populations. The Director will work to build a relationship with the 1133rd, a transportation company stationed in Mason City, the Veteran's Affairs office in Mason City, Veteran's Clinic in Mason City, and the Family Alliance for Veterans in Forest City. Initial efforts will be to include RSVP literature about the program and volunteer opportunities in all of these locations.

In 2012, RSVP launched a Pen Pal program. Recruiting for volunteers has occurred in Assisted Living facilities, which includes residents with age-related disabilities. This is proving to be a good resource

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since, essentially, people volunteer from home which allows them to be part of the volunteer experience and stay connected to youth. At the end of the year, Pen Pal parties will be held at the facilities. RSVP of NCI also partners with IRIS, the Iowa Radio Reading Information Service for the Blind and Print Handicapped. Volunteers read the local newspaper over the IRIS radio frequency at a local radio station. Listeners are legally blind, visually impaired, or physically handicapped. In 2013, IRIS will include announcements about becoming a Reading Coach or Pen Pal in one of RSVP's partner schools. In addition, a member of the RSVP Advisory Council is the CEO of Opportunity Village, an organization dedicated to serving individuals with intellectual disabilities. He has been a great resource and often reminds council members to "consider people with disabilities as volunteers, and not only as those being served by volunteers." RSVP staff and the Council continually search for volunteer opportunities for populations with disabilities.

Year after year, RSVP retains the majority of its volunteers. During the 2010-2011 program year, RSVP retained 88% of volunteers from the previous year. Of those lost, 92% left due to health issues or no longer being able to volunteer. In addition to the training and face-to-face contact RSVP staff has with volunteers throughout the year, RSVP's retention strategy includes continuous one-on-one contact between staff and volunteers through phone calls, emails, and personal notes. Staff strive to build a personal relationship with each volunteer. The Volunteer Coordinator and Administrative Assistant are the first line of contact and do a wonderful job staying connected to volunteers.

Recognition of volunteers happens throughout the year. In the RSVP newsletter, Volunteer Voice, a section called "Spotlight on Success" gives kudos to volunteers and stations for exceptional efforts. In November, volunteers receive a Thanksgiving Letter thanking them for their service, and in January, Reading Coaches receive a letter from Dr. Deb Derr, President of NIACC, and a certificate from Terry

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Branstad, Governor of Iowa, for their efforts as certified mentors with the Iowa Mentoring Partnership in honor of National Mentoring Month. In April, all RSVP volunteers receive a small token of appreciation during National Volunteer Week. At the annual volunteer recognition event in May, program staff and NIACC personnel acknowledge volunteer commitment and longevity, plus report on successes of the year. Volunteers who have reached the bronze, silver, or gold level are presented with the President's Volunteer Service Award and are featured in the Volunteer Voice. Food and entertainment are provided, as well as an environment to socialize with fellow volunteers. In May 2012, RSVP sponsored an ice cream social for volunteers. Shelly Schmit, PhD, a Vice President at NIACC, spoke to volunteers about making a difference in the lives of children. She thanked volunteers for their dedication noting that, "The work you do with struggling readers affects more than just that student that year -- it affects the student's future success, and their achievements affect the success of their future generations." She identified herself as a "struggling reader" when she was in elementary school who worked with an adult for extra reading help. This message had a profound impact on the volunteers when the Director pointed out that Shelly had recently received her PhD.

Program Management

RSVP partners with stations to supervise, support, and assist with training volunteers. Stations are expected to offer meaningful assignments, a professional work environment, and recognition of volunteers. RSVP fosters a strong working partnership with stations through on-site visits, phone calls, e-mails, and a newsletter. Prior to recruiting volunteers, RSVP and station staff collaborate to develop position descriptions, volunteer expectations, and training. Station staff are educated on the role of volunteers in their facility and effective volunteer management practices. RSVP works with each station to develop the program that fits best with their school and classrooms.

RSVP of NCI utilizes many resources to comply with regulations. The Iowa Association of RSVP

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Directors is vibrant. The group meets four times a year to mentor new directors, provide training, market RSVP on a state level, and build a network among RSVP programs. The Director taps into experienced members, as well as the State Corporate Office, to interpret and implement RSVP regulations and applicable laws. The Director also participates in conference calls offered by CNCS and utilizes resources and training webinars from the CNCS National Service Knowledge Network. An RSVP Volunteer Handbook and Procedure Manual helps to ensure that proper practices are in place and followed by all staff.

Partnerships with Volunteer Stations are based on criteria which indicate community need that can be met by the skills, wisdom, and time of RSVP volunteers. Due to participation on the Advisory Council from members in each county, as well as the relationships the Director has throughout the community from her own commitments and memberships, RSVP is able to build relationships with non-profit organizations and create new and appropriate programming as the need arises. The infrastructure to effectively manage Volunteer Stations already exists with the school districts that RSVP partners with, and it can easily be transferred to any new Volunteer Station. Current best practices of the program are utilized with volunteer stations that are outside of the focus area.

RSVP of NCI does not currently have a need to graduate any volunteer stations and will continue working with all stations and volunteers. If the need arises, RSVP will work with the station staff to ensure that their needs will be met by other volunteers. RSVP will share all resources available with those stations in order for them to continue recruiting, training, and utilizing volunteers.

Stations assist RSVP with the collection of data for National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs. Teachers and school personnel are trained at the annual orientation on collecting and

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submitting volunteer hours on the Volunteer Attendance form. At the Kick-off meetings, volunteers are trained on where to check-in at each school and where to sign the attendance form. This data is submitted to RSVP on a monthly basis.

RSVP accesses data that teachers and schools are already using to track student performance.

Teachers conduct reading assessments at the beginning of each school year. Example assessments used in area schools include, MAP - Measure of Academic Performance, STAR Reading Assessment, and DIBELS Benchmark Goals. These assessments determine who needs extra help in reading and who should work with an RSVP volunteer. Teachers conduct the same assessments at the end of the year to determine improvement. These scores are shared with RSVP each fall and spring via the Student Identification and Results form.

RSVP resources, both financial and in-kind, are secured by the Director, Dean of Continuing Education, and Advisory Council. All monetary resources are processed and tracked by the Business Services Office at NIACC, which ensures sound accounting procedures are practiced. The Director, in partnership with the Dean of Continuing Education, Director of Business Services, and Grant Accounting Assistant, establish the RSVP budget. With help from the Business Services Office, the Director oversees the budget throughout the year. The Grant Accounting Assistant provides monthly detailed reports of RSVP expenditures. The RSVP Administrative Assistant keeps record of everything submitted to the business office, such as copies of invoices, reimbursement forms, and timesheets on file in the RSVP office. The College utilizes Datatel e-software, a fully integrated information management system, which provides real-time access to financial information. At any time, RSVP staff can monitor financial transactions and access fund balances.

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As the sponsor, NIACC provides much in-kind support of RSVP, which is detailed later in the narrative. The RSVP Director, in conjunction with the Dean of Continuing Education, assures that RSVP has adequate work space, efficient equipment, and clearly defined roles to operate within the College on an annual basis.

Organizational Capability

NIACC has sponsored RSVP of NCI since 2009. The College successfully partners with RSVP by implementing and sustaining thriving programs. When NIACC assumed sponsorship, it hired two individuals to manage and support activities of the grant. When federal funding was cut in 2010, RSVP was forced to lay off the Assistant and hire two part-time employees.

The Director, who oversees all aspects of RSVP, is a full-time Professional Salaried Staff employee. The Director provides oversight and administration for RSVP; develops and maintains relationships with volunteers, volunteer stations, community organizations, and funding agencies; and assures files, records, and reports comply with federal regulations. All policies and procedures for salaried positions, as defined in the NIACC Personnel Manual, apply to the Director. A performance review is conducted annually. The Dean of Continuing Education approves leave requests, reimbursement requisitions, and purchases.

The RSVP Director, Molly Anderegg, has been employed with RSVP since January 2010. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication Studies and brings to the position a background in human services and fundraising. Her most recent position was with the NIACC Foundation where she coordinated grant efforts for the College. Her past experience includes working as the Development Director for a local parochial K-12 school system; as Coordinator for the Career Link program at NIACC, which serves high school students who are taking college courses; and as Field Executive for

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the Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa. She possesses strengths in communication, process coordination, and program management. Anderegg is an Ambassador for the Mason City Chamber, serves on the Volunteer Committee for the Youth Task Force, is a member of the Aging Services Coalition, chair of the Newman Parent Association, co-chair of the Engagement Committee for the Mason City Blue Zones Project, treasurer for the Iowa Association of RSVP Directors, and a Girl Scout leader.

The Director reports to Terry Schumaker, Dean of Continuing Education. The Director and Dean meet on a bi-weekly basis to review RSVP activities and initiatives. The Dean takes an active role in securing county funds for RSVP and attends Advisory Council meetings regularly. He is well-known in the service area as his past experience has exposed him to many businesses, committees, and boards in North Central Iowa.

The Volunteer Coordinator serves as the point of contact for all volunteers. Jan Nierling has a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Journalism and most recently worked in public relations and marketing. Her past experience includes serving as a newspaper and magazine writer and editor. She also volunteers at Mercy Medical Center-North Iowa, serves on and is past president of the volunteers' Board of Directors and now serves on the hospital's Foundation Board of Directors. She was also an RSVP Reading Buddy during the 2010-2011 school year. Jan's primary responsibilities for RSVP are recruiting and training volunteers, handling press releases, publicity, and marketing efforts, and producing the Volunteer Voice newsletter.

RSVP of NCI is in the process of hiring an Administrative Assistant. The assistant provides support for all aspects of RSVP, is responsible for tracking volunteer and program statistics, and maintains program records and files. The RSVP Director, Volunteer Coordinator and Administrative Assistant

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work closely together. Detailed Procedure Manuals outline the responsibilities of both support positions, which allows for cross-training if an RSVP employee is absent, and allows new employees to be easily trained. A calendar of processes and procedures also outlines in detail the activities, events, programs, and other responsibilities throughout the RSVP year.

NIACC is a two-year, public community college. Approximately 3,500 students take college credit courses and 13,000 people take an array of non-credit opportunities, from customized business and industry training to professional development and re-licensure, to personal enrichment classes for people of all ages. NIACC is a strategic partner with school systems, businesses, and communities that are working to educate students and train a qualified workforce for the future.

NIACC is committed to serving adults. Tuition incentives for adults have been offered since 1997. In 2004, the College added an Enrollment Specialist for Adult Students position. The College embraces the aging population in North Central Iowa and continually seeks new ways to deliver programs for older individuals. NIACC has several programs for adult learners including the Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI), a community of adults who learn for the joy of learning. LLI serves people of all educational backgrounds and provides the perfect way to expand knowledge. Members take advantage of short courses, lectures and discussions, study circles, social events, and civic engagement opportunities.

NIACC has a long tradition of maintaining relationships with retired staff and faculty. Each year, retirees are invited to attend the Holiday Reception, Spring Grill, and Retiree Dinner, which allows retired employees to socialize with current employees, the college president, and the President's Council. The College, along with the retirees, is creating an independent group, which will plan events

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and initiate interaction with the College. The College's objective is to maintain better communication with retirees, and ensure that they know they are appreciated, valued, and engaged.

NIACC is experienced with performance measurement. Accountability is crucial to its accreditations. NIACC participates in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) through the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. AQIP is based on continuous quality improvement principles. Last year NIACC developed a five-year strategic plan which included employee and community member participation. Goals, implementation strategies, and evaluation methods were developed as part of the plan. Key performance indicators were established and will be updated annually.

Measuring impact or outcomes is important to most everything done at NIACC. Classes, clubs, and organizations have an impact-based obligation as part of the curriculum or membership. These groups have a positive impact both on and off campus. For example, the NIACC Student Senate annually hosts blood drives, a Coats for Kids campaign, and litter pick-up on roadways. The Social Responsibility and Community Service class sponsors annual spring break trips to parts of the country affected by natural disasters.

The College respects the value of volunteerism. In 2009, NIACC added a Community Service policy. Employees can volunteer up to eight hours, during regular work hours, per fiscal year with charitable organizations. The College appreciates the personal time employees contribute toward charitable organizations and encourages employees to use work time to go above and beyond their normal volunteering. The purpose of this effort is to support activities that impact quality of life, as well as serve and enhance communities in which employees live and work. NIACC also recognizes that

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participating in these types of activities enriches the lives of employees.

NIACC provides furnished office space for all RSVP employees along with utilities, phone, fax, and internet service. All equipment and college facilities are available to the program, such as, but not limited to, meeting rooms, classrooms for trainings, copiers, and printing services. The College also provides standard office supplies, paper, and printer cartridges for RSVP. All of these tangible assets are at no cost to RSVP. The Technology Services department at NIACC is responsible for purchasing and maintaining all of the College's technology-based equipment. NIACC provides students and staff with up-to-date technology and effective technical support. For most computer equipment, the College utilizes a five-year rotation and adheres to a technology baseline. In 2012, the Volunteer Coordinator received a new laptop.

The NIACC Board of Trustees functions as the legislative and policy-making body charged with oversight and control of College activities. The President's Council sets direction for the systems, operational policies, and practices of NIACC. All College policies apply to the RSVP program and staff. For example, the travel policy states overnight travel within Iowa requires approval from supervisors and out-of-state travel must be approved by the appropriate Vice President. The purchasing policy requires the approval of the responsible Division Chair and the Vice President for Administrative Services if under \$500. All policies can be found on the internal employee webpage. The office of Human Resources assists RSVP with all personnel management needs such as hiring. The Director, as a supervising employee, was recently required to complete the Unlawful Harassment Prevention for Higher Education Staff webinar. All resources available to college employees, such as training, are available to RSVP staff.

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The Advisory Council for RSVP of NCI serves in a consulting capacity. Its primary purpose is to monitor and review program development and assessment. Members study matters related to RSVP, make suggestions concerning the functions of the program, and provide support to RSVP as it serves volunteers, partner agencies, and the community. For example, the Advisory Council recently engaged in much discussion about background checks for volunteers. In 2011, the Council made the decision to conduct background checks for Reading Buddy and Reading Coach Volunteers. With the recent addition of the Pen Pal Program, the Council again discussed the need for background checks and made the decision to implement checks for Pen Pals. Members did not take this decision lightly as there was a lengthy, vibrant discussion.

The Council is charged with activities such as, but not limited to, short- and long-term planning, annual review of its own work and performance, and program evaluation. Members should demonstrate knowledge of their communities and a passion for volunteerism. Membership consists of 3-4 members from each county in the service area and includes retirees, former educators, human services professionals, members of the media, leaders of organizations, and RSVP volunteers.

The Business Services Office at NIACC oversees budgets and finances for all departments of the College and specific programs related to the College. NIACC employees in the Business Office process requests for reimbursement, issue expense and payroll checks, and prepare financial reports. The Grant Accounting Specialist works closely with the RSVP program to prepare all financial reports required by CNCS. The Director of Business Services provides fiscal oversight for RSVP. The College contracts with an outside agency to provide an independent audit on an annual basis. The responsibility of the auditor is to express an opinion on the financial statements based upon facts found during the audit. In the auditor's opinion, the financial statements of the College present fairly,

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in all material respects, the financial position of both. Changes in net assets and cash flow conform to generally accepted accounting practices. The College historically receives a clean audit each year.

NIACC has successful experience in securing and managing federal grant funds. The College has managed a Title III grant through the Department of Education as well several earmarks through the Small Business Administration in various stages of completion. NIACC is also the fiscal agent for the area Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The Business Services Office at NIACC provides technical support and regulatory compliance oversight to all grant-funded projects.

RSVP and NIACC have strong relationships with County Supervisors, United Way officials, and members of the Iowa Legislature, which all support RSVP of NCI on an annual basis. Every year the Director and Dean of Continuing Education travel to each county board of supervisors to provide information about RSVP and request funding. Also, an application for funding is submitted to the United Way each year and the Director sits on the Education Committee for the United Way. Advisory Council members also assist with securing resources, when appropriate. Some members have direct relationships with county supervisors, which prove to be beneficial in all four counties. NIACC staff and Advisory Council members will continue assisting with all aspects of securing resources as appropriate. Traditionally, RSVP of NCI exceeds the 30% match requirement every year.

Other

NA

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

NA