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### Executive Summary

Through the Oxnard RSVP, an estimated 470 volunteers will serve their community, forming an army of active older adults combating unmet community needs. They will help an expanding senior population tackle the limitations of aging, help low-income seniors stretch limited funds by providing extra food, and fight off the paralysis of isolation by creating a welcoming environment of free activities, classes and groups. For the hungry in the four cities served, they will help at the county food bank and its food pantries network: collecting, boxing and distributing food to about 74,000 people yearly. All these activities fall into our primary focus area of Healthy Futures.

Our returning vets will receive a smile and a new set of interview-ready clothes from RSVP volunteers serving at the Veterans Career Closet. And the capacity of three libraries will be expanded by the fund-raising efforts of volunteers.

Our network of about 40 partner agencies run the gamut of a small nonprofit which matches friendly visitors with elders to the county's largest food bank. In between we have partners that tutor disadvantaged youth, grocery shop for homebound seniors, match home-owning seniors with roommates, and help the homeless receive access to healthcare and legal assistance.

At the end of our 12-month performance period: 200 people will receive access to care help through about 23 volunteers; almost 100 seniors will have food delivered to their homes by about 30 volunteers; over 800 will age in place more comfortably through the help of 113 volunteers; and a battalion of 72 volunteers will provide supplemental groceries to about 1,000 seniors.

More than half those served through aging in place assignments, 500 seniors, will report they feel less lonely, have close ties to other people or are more satisfied with their life. Of those receiving supplemental food, about 700 will report it has made them more food secure.

We will accomplish this with a CNCS federal investment of \$67,777, supplemented by \$109,155 provided by our sponsor, the City of Oxnard (including \$25,441 in "excess amount").

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### Strengthening Communities

Geographically, the service area related to this application is located in west-central California along the Pacific Ocean. Census figures show the combined population of the four cities served is 395,291 people. Oxnard, with a population of almost 200,000 (roughly half the entire service area), is the largest municipality in Ventura County and the 20th largest city in California.

Three of the cities - Oxnard, Ventura and Pt. Hueneme - hug the shoreline while the fourth, Camarillo, is landlocked. With a Mediterranean climate, the area is an important agricultural center. Thirty percent of all strawberries grown in California come from the Oxnard Plain; it is the county's leading crop valued at \$542 million in 2010. The Port of Hueneme, the only deep water port between Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay, services international businesses with a focus on cars, fresh fruit and produce, and is a primary support facility for the offshore oil industry.

There are also two Navy facilities along the coast: the Naval Air Station at Pt. Mugu (adjacent to Oxnard and Camarillo) and the Naval Construction Battalion Center (in Pt. Hueneme, the smallest of the four cities served). Together they form Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC).

The demographics for the four cities are a tale of disparity, with Oxnard and Camarillo being near opposites when looking at Census 2010 data. Oxnard has a Hispanic population of 73.5% while Camarillo's Hispanic population is 23%. Almost 92% of Camarillo's residents reported having a high school degree and 38% a college degree while Oxnard's numbers are far lower -- 63% and 15%, respectively. Poverty figures, too, display this inconsistency, with Oxnard having 15%, or 29,990 people, living below the federal poverty level and Camarillo having just below 5%, or 3,097. In general terms, demographics for the other two cities lie between these two extremes with Pt. Hueneme's numbers similar to Oxnard and Ventura skewing closer to Camarillo.

The principal employment engines are information technology, agriculture, healthcare, financial services and NBVC. About \$7 billion in cargo value moved through the Port in 2011, indicating no

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growth since 2007. Activity currently sustains more than 2,000 direct and indirect jobs, but these are half the figures from four years ago.

NBVC is the county's largest employer, with more than 17,320 personnel and almost 3,000 related jobs within the county. Despite local efforts, these employment figures have declined due to base consolidations. There are new concerns NBVC will be hit hard if budget sequestration happens in January 2013 and large cuts are made to the U.S. defense budget. According to the Center for Security Policy, contracts for the three county region of Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo amounted to \$1.2 billion last year. They estimate about 9%, or \$113 million, would be lost if sequestration proceeds.

The agricultural industry provided 31,000 jobs in the county and accounted for 4.4% of overall economic activity in 2010, according to the county Farm Bureau. There are about 20,000 farmworkers in the county. The Farm Bureau estimates over 90% were born outside the U.S., mostly in Mexico. Historically farmworker positions are low-wage jobs.

Across Southern California unemployment was a problem for a fifth straight year in 2012, although there are recent signs of improvement. The leisure and hospitality sector, which was disproportionately hit locally, is currently one of four areas in which federal labor statistics show positive growth, 7.7% over the past 12 months in the Oxnard metro area. The others are a modest 2% gain in information sector jobs, 4.6% in financial activities and 5.5% in professional and business services, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The differences between the communities continue to play out in the unemployment rates. According to state Economic Development Dept., Oxnard had 12.7% unemployment, Pt. Hueneme 11%, Ventura 8.5% and Camarillo 6.7% in August 2012. Along with the continuing lack of jobs, the University of California Santa Barbara's Economic Forecast Project reports that almost half the jobs in Ventura County pay less than a poverty-level salary.

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Not surprisingly, an estimated 73,000 county adults struggled to put food on their table during the recession, according to the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. Those in households with children as well as low-income Hispanics were particularly affected by food insecurity. FOOD Share, the county food bank and our largest partner agency, reports the number of people helped more than doubled since 2008, when it was 30,000. Today they report serving 74,000 annually.

Community dissimilarities continue when looking at the senior population. According to the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA), Camarillo has the highest concentration of seniors, with 29% of its residents being 55 and older, while Oxnard has 16%. Combined, the four cities have 84,300 residents age 55 and older, or 21% of their population. According to California Department of Finance projections, the county's age 60+ population is expected to increase faster than any other age group.

Meanwhile, many county elders today do not have adequate income to provide for their everyday needs. The California Elder Economic Security Standard Index (Elder Index) is a tool that quantifies how much income a senior age 65+ requires to adequately meet the most basic needs within the community in which they live. VCAAA reports that 39% of all county elders age 65+ and 50% of all elder women living alone have incomes below the Elder Index. Nearly eight out of 10 Hispanic seniors also have incomes below the Elder Index.

Hunger in America reports that, nationally, hunger rates among seniors doubled during the recession. The number of food insecure seniors is projected to increase by 50% by 2025, when the youngest of the Baby Boomers reaches age 60.

### PRIMARY FOCUS AREA

The common denominators in all four cities are hunger and a burgeoning senior population, thus this project has chosen to make Healthy Futures our Primary Focus Area. We will have volunteers

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assigned in the activities associated with H4 (Access to Care), H8 (Aging in Place) and H11 (Obesity and Food).

Tackling hunger has been an ongoing issue in the community and a project focus for many years. To address this issue (H11 - Obesity and Food - Providing Services), members serve with the county food bank and through its Brown Bag program, which provides supplemental groceries twice monthly to qualified low-income seniors. Currently, approximately 1,800 seniors countywide are enrolled in the Brown Bag program with 70% of them living in this project's service area. Past surveys have found the program improved the nutritional value of 70% of participants' diets and over 90% have responded that the program saves them money.

Related service activities: volunteers sort food and box or bag it for the final consumer; assist clients with paperwork and questions; and distribute food.

Our relationship, i.e., the infrastructure to work with the food bank, is long established. RSVP and food bank personnel regularly communicate about needs and are mutually supportive, e.g., we are invited to and assist with each other's volunteer appreciation events.

Not all seniors are hungry but nearly all will likely encounter aging issues, such as isolation or lack of mobility, at some point (H8 - Aging in Place - Food Delivery). With an exploding senior population this will impact all segments of society, if it is not mitigated.

We partner with Shop Ahoy, a grocery shopping service for homebound seniors, to help those who can't get to or walk through a grocery store, but can still cook at home. Volunteers call seniors to take orders, shop in the store and deliver groceries. That home delivery volunteer also provides companionship, often returning during the week for additional visits. Other volunteers will deliver senior nutrition meals to homebound seniors.

A senior survey done by a California Area Agency on Aging found that one in five seniors said depression or isolation is a challenge. Studies have shown that depression often stems from isolation.

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Nationally, over 29% of all noninstitutionalized elders lived alone, representing 37% of women and 19% of men, according to Census 2010. That proportion increases with advanced age -- almost half of women 75+ live alone.

Maintaining social connections is a critical element to keeping seniors living independently. Many studies have found, regardless of gender, seniors with more social connections have a lower death rate while isolated seniors have the highest mortality from all diseases. The benefits aren't tied to the numbers of friends or family members, but to the range of social activities, frequency of contacts and quality of relationships.

It is contraindicative that an increasing number of seniors are socially isolated or lonely at a time when our senior population is expected to grow more rapidly than any other age group.

How our country deals with the significant numbers of aging Baby Boomers can, in part, be mitigated by taking advantage of advances in behavioral health to keep the elderly as healthy and active as possible and making sure all ages are integrated into the fabric of community life, according to a report released by the National Institutes of Health.

It will be important to all industries serving seniors, but in particular to healthcare, that our elders are aided in living a more full life, replete with the social connections that help maintain physical and mental good health.

The Oxnard RSVP project aims to accomplish this through a number of avenues (H8 -- Aging in Place -- Companionship). We recruit and place friendly visitor volunteers with two partners -- Caregivers: Volunteers Assisting the Elderly and Catholic Charities' OASIS program. We recently renewed our Memorandum of Understanding with the Camarillo Health Care District and plan to recruit volunteers to help with their countywide Senior Support Line. Trained volunteers will staff this toll-free number providing a place for seniors to call for resources or just hear a friendly voice.

Our newest initiative, Seniors Together: Aging with Grace, Energy and Strength (STAGES),

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provides companionship and programming to eliminate isolation using RSVP volunteers to mobilize known strategies that bring active seniors together in a spirit of sharing, cooperation and acceptance. Service will include activities such as leading discussion or support groups and organizing restaurant or museum outings within the structure provided by the Oxnard Senior Services office. The catalyst behind this initiative is to get seniors involved and making connections, i.e., socially integrated, while they are still active.

We already have experience in recruiting and training volunteers to lead classes and finding sites to host activities. At the core of this initiative, with about 75 volunteers, will be our 30 award-winning exercise classes operated with a focus on creating community. While on the surface these look like exercise classes -- they meet twice a week and they do exercise -- in reality they are about building connections at an age when it's difficult to meet new people and make new friends. Participants come to exercise, but it's the relationships that keep them coming back. Some of the classes gather monthly at a restaurant to celebrate birthdays, while others hold parties in class to note special days and holidays. Some have organized their own appreciation event for their leaders. One class even nominated their two instructors for Women of the Year. And they won. The value of these activities and community building are stressed during initial and supplemental training. Each year we host a best practices session in which volunteers share the special activities they do to build camaraderie.

An anonymous participant survey completed in March 2012 found 75% had a significant improvement in socialization and another 19% had seen a slight improvement. The survey also showed 63% had a significant improvement in their own sense of well-being while another 30% had a slight improvement. Clearly this program is impacting participants' social connections in a positive manner. Last year, about 700 participants attended the year-round classes, located in all of our service area cities. The survey this year will include pertinent questions from the Senior Companion Independent Living survey.

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STAGES volunteers will receive special training to help them understand the elderly and make them aware of community resources. We will partner with the local SCAN Senior Resource Center to present their "Trading Ages" curriculum. This will help them understand what some of the more common infirmities of aging are, such as macular degeneration or neuropathy. Although they may have some of these themselves, it is likely they won't have all those simulated. They will also receive training using the CNCS Independent Living Curriculum.

Volunteers involved in our H4 (Access to Care - Coaching) service activities will focus on maintaining mobility as a key component to seniors staying healthy. They will help vision impaired seniors learn coping skills and provide information on available tools to compensate for deteriorating sight. Through 8-week A Matter of Balance classes, they will assist seniors to overcome their fear of falling by teaching how to walk, common places for falls and home safety, among others, and work to erase the stigma associated with falls. Other volunteers will team with occupational therapists to help seniors understand the impact of aging on driving and show them medical devices that can help maintain driving safety despite limitations brought on by health and aging. And finally, volunteers will serve in a hospital community education program, assisting at health clinics and fairs.

The outputs within our Primary Focus Area will be the number of people served within the confines of each performance measure (H4, H8 or H11). Performance measure outcomes will also be done in our Primary Focus Area on the Brown Bag program and STAGES. An annual participant survey will provide information on Brown Bag's impact on food security. We will ask STAGES participants questions from the Senior Companion Independent Living Performance Measures survey to determine the program impact on the number of social ties and support.

We also plan to increase our involvement with veterans programs. The director is a member of the Ventura County Military Collaborative and the Ventura County Veterans Employment Committee. The latter is a group dedicated to helping veterans find jobs and includes representatives from the state

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Economic Development Department's (EDD) veterans' employment initiative, a local college, area businesses and veterans, among others.

In coordination with this nonprofit group, RSVP will recruit volunteers to staff a Veterans Career Closet scheduled to open at Oxnard College soon. Veterans will receive a voucher during their separation interview or at local EDD offices that entitles them to come to the Closet and choose an outfit to wear to job interviews. The college has a new veterans office, making this a good location. Service activities will be receiving and sorting clothes and helping vets choose appropriate outfits. Outputs will be how many veterans receive clothes, but we also plan to track how many obtain jobs.

RSVP has been a part of the Oxnard Plain community for over 37 years, including 35 years under the City of Oxnard's sponsorship. The program will operate out of the City of Oxnard's Senior Services office, a location to which seniors come for information and resources and which provides expertise on senior issues.

Members serve at about 40 local non-profit, public and proprietary healthcare agencies spread out among the four cities within the project's service area. The majority of our members are involved in long-term, sustained projects.

Over the years, partnerships have changed based upon the needs of the community and CNCS strategic initiatives. Many, however, have remained fixed due to the consistency of community needs. We keep in contact with our established partners; the director is a member of a number of organizations to maintain the pulse of the nonprofit world as well as for networking purposes. She recently helped start the Nonprofit Picnic Table. This informal monthly gathering of nonprofits meets at the beach, literally at the picnic tables, to share ideas and information and provide support.

In terms of infrastructure related to the volunteers, the advent of national performance measures will bring changes to RSVP, but there are parts of the infrastructure that won't be altered because doing so would debilitate the program's effectiveness.

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Among those things are our recruiting efforts, retention of volunteers through proper training and recognition, and our intake process, through which we will continue to try to match volunteers to positions that use their skills and abilities the best.

We will persist in taking the time to properly interview and match volunteers with a service opportunity. If we don't have anything that interests them, we will make recommendations for them to follow up on outside our RSVP circle.

We will continue to provide trainings to volunteer coordinators on such diverse topics as social media, recruiting and retaining baby boomers, record keeping, and the health benefits of volunteering. We will routinely pass on information about online or in-person trainings and recognition opportunities. And the Director will continue to serve as a reference on volunteer issues to partner agencies on an as-needed basis.

### **Recruitment and Development**

#### **CREATE HIGH QUALITY VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS**

The first step to ensuring members have a high quality assignment is proper placement. There are two main components to this: a refined intake process and an understanding of available opportunities.

Member intake starts with a personal interview. This will allow us to truly understand a volunteer's abilities, skills and available time before we make suggestions of places to serve. Members are never forced to take an assignment, and, indeed, it will be stressed that they can return to us for a new opportunity if this one doesn't work out or if they want to serve at additional sites.

Our registration form collects information about areas of service, the types of locations (hospital, school, office, etc.) and the age groups the member finds most interesting, as well as the member's skills and work history. It will be updated to emphasize Healthy Futures assignments so those are always the first a volunteer considers.

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The other component to ensuring high quality assignments is knowing the dimensions of available opportunities, i.e., what skills and abilities are needed and what past experience might be required. To know this, we require job descriptions from partner agencies for all our placements. Site visits will provide an understanding of the environment in which volunteers serve which can also lead to better matches between volunteer skills and abilities and their success in serving their community.

Training non-profit volunteer managers is key to ensuring high quality assignments. During trainings, we will emphasize the importance of meeting a member's needs and not just the non-profit's. We discuss treating volunteers not as placeholders but as true members of the agency's team. Without that collaboration and appreciation, it is unlikely volunteers, particularly Baby Boomers, will stay long. The director is regularly asked to lead discussions or present information at the Ventura County Volunteer Coordinators Council and helps teach an annual volunteer management class. Partner agencies are invited to attend these learning opportunities.

In regards to improving themselves through service, in a widely circulated report CNCS has relayed the health benefits of volunteering. Not surprisingly, the simple act of giving of oneself enhances the life of the volunteer: those who serve have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer.

In addition, serving can impact a volunteer's sense of accomplishment, give volunteers a needed sense of purpose and provide something to look forward to. It also helps expand the volunteer's social network, which is another indicator of a longer, healthier life. Volunteering truly is beneficial both to the community and the volunteer.

### ENSURE NEEDED TRAINING

Our job description form requests information on the type of training provided. If training is provided, we strive to understand what it is and how it is tied to the position so we can explain this to

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volunteers before placement. Often knowing training is provided can convince a wary volunteer to try a placement.

If RSVP staff perceives training is needed, but not provided, it is discussed with the partner agency to clarify the situation. If training is deemed necessary, we request it be developed before volunteers are placed in an assignment.

Many of our Aging in Place assignments will be brought together under a new initiative titled STAGES (Seniors Together: Aging with Grace, Energy and Strength). The link between all these programs is creating community and increasing social ties among seniors. These volunteers will receive training using the CNCS Independent Living Curriculum so they have the information and resources to be effective in their assignments. The local SCAN Resource Center has agreed to provide their "Trading Ages" training through which participants experience some of the maladies of older age, e.g., neuropathy and impaired vision. This can be an eye-opening experience for younger volunteers.

Our largest STAGES program requires volunteers to complete at least 10 hours of training before leading a group. Quarterly trainings will keep them updated on recent findings regarding senior health and ways to further the connections created within the program.

The Independent Living training will also be offered to other agencies where volunteers deal directly with the aged, such as Shop Ahoy where volunteers shop and deliver groceries to elder shut-ins.

## VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

With over 30 years of history, the Oxnard RSVP already has a large, vital corps of senior volunteers, but the effort to maintain a strong, representative group never stops. Recruiting will be accomplished using a range of media to attract a diverse corps of volunteers that reflect the

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demographics of our service area.

\* Recreation Guides: We typically run free ads or an article in the Oxnard, Ventura and Camarillo Health Care District recreation guides.

\* Internet: We have our own website ([venturacountyrsvp.org](http://venturacountyrsvp.org)) and Facebook page. We continually list opportunities on [VolunteerMatch.org](http://VolunteerMatch.org) and [VolunteerVenturaCounty.org](http://VolunteerVenturaCounty.org). We also send information to an online 'newspaper' targeted at the local Spanish-speaking population.

\* Educational and recreational programs are another way to recruit volunteers. This office makes presentations, including How to Find a Volunteer Position, which allow us to get before the public and promote our programs. The director presents during the bi-annual countywide Senior Summit; this year's topic was Maintaining a Healthy Mind and Body (through volunteering).

\* Print Media: We send press releases about service opportunities to newspapers and other local media, including Spanish-language publications and monthly magazines. We are listed in senior services directories compiled by the county Area Agency on Aging, the Camarillo Council on Aging and the county newspaper, and in the "Blue Book," an online and print resource guide.

\* Word of Mouth: Of course, the best recruiter is someone who already knows the potential volunteer. We know this through practice, but it was also reported in the Corporation's 2009 Volunteering in America Research Highlights. We will continue to encourage our members to enlist their friends and family members in a variety of ways. An upcoming recognition includes a Night at the Symphony appreciation allows volunteers to bring three friends. Part of the welcoming statement will include an invitation to join in service.

\* Public Access Television: Updates on RSVP programs are regularly presented to the Oxnard Parks and Recreation Commission during televised meetings accessible to all residents. Program flyers and videos are also aired on public access television in the region.

\*Boomers: While continuing general recruiting efforts, we will also focus some messaging on the

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Baby Boomer generation as they will dominate the future. We teamed with Pepperdine University students enrolled in a service leadership project to create posters, a brochure and a website ([www.venturacountyrsvp.org](http://www.venturacountyrsvp.org)) targeting Boomers.

\*Veterans: There is a military base within the grant's service area. The Director has made presentations before the local Retired Military Officers organization and places recruitment information at the retiree's office. She also recently joined the Ventura County Military Collaborative, which is expected to provide more opportunities to recruit volunteers as well as ways to serve veterans and the military.

The 2010 Census shows Oxnard, in particular, is heavily Hispanic (73.5%). The RSVP Volunteer Coordinator is bilingual, English/Spanish, as are some of the general office staff so as to help with the recruitment and placement of monolingual Spanish volunteers. Most partner agencies need volunteers who can speak English, but we also have sites which can readily accept Spanish-only speakers.

### RETAIN AND RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS

We will work to retain volunteers through a variety of avenues including educating partner agencies, placing volunteers in assignments that "fit," a variety of thank yous and providing opportunities to reflect on the meaning of their service.

\*Educating Partner Agencies - Ultimately, much of the effort to retain volunteers falls on our partner agencies who oversee the volunteers' day-to-day service. So we will provide the volunteer coordinator trainings mentioned earlier to help our partner agencies manage volunteers well.

\*Assignments - For our part, retention will start as soon as a volunteer walks through the door. Our intake process is designed to make sure members understand RSVP and its benefits and are placed in assignments based on their abilities and skills. We follow-up placement with a phone call at two weeks and one month and send out welcome letters as soon as a new member starts volunteering.

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We routinely contact volunteers who have not reported hours in the previous six months.

\*Thank You - Regular and appropriate recognition is important to all volunteers and can aid in retention. Acknowledgement is an important practice in volunteer management, yet one type of recognition does not fit all volunteers. We will institute a variety of strategies.

Our main appreciation event will be an annual luncheon for all RSVP members. In the past, the volunteers who attended truly appreciated the opportunity to dress up and be served an elegant meal. During the event, we will honor those with 4,000 or more hours by awarding them the President's Volunteer Service Award in the lifetime category. Our elected officials have always helped us honor members for years of service by issuing Congressional Certificates and sending staff to present the awards. The recognition program will list both hours served in the current year and years of service of all active volunteers. As a volunteer ages or is sick, they often serve fewer hours. By listing both, we are able to fully recognize their effort.

Recently, we were offered the opportunity to invite volunteers to a private dress rehearsal of the local professional symphony as a way to recognize them. We are inviting those volunteers with 100 or more hours this year for such a special event.

Other forms of acknowledgement will include:

- A volunteer will make phone calls to acknowledge birthdays.
- We will mail small tokens of acknowledgment, such as a card, to recognize special accomplishments or extra efforts.
- A simple "Thank you" is always appreciated and we say or write those words often.

\*Meaning of Service - Encouraging volunteers to reflect on the meaning of their service can boost volunteer retention as they more deeply understand the role their contribution makes to their community. When reports are made on client surveys, we will share these findings with the volunteers so they may better understand their impact. During an annual recognition luncheon, we

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will report on the program's accomplishments for the year, providing an opportunity for those attending to reflect on and share with others their role in our success.

Reflection will also occur when volunteers: 1) Help with recruitment during which they share the importance of volunteering in their lives and the impact they have on others and 2) Participate in volunteer surveys in which they are asked about the impact of their service.

### Program Management

#### MANAGEMENT OF VOLUNTEER STATIONS/COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS

This applicant has a long history of managing an RSVP program, including maintaining appropriate relationships with associated partner agencies and following program regulations and laws. We have successfully completed many CNCS monitorings without receiving any egregious findings.

Any new stations will be initially vetted based on fit with CNCS priorities, i.e., the six focus areas, veterans and capacity building. Other criteria include whether they:

- 1) answer a need which has developed in the community.
- 2) provide a way to meet unmet community needs which is not already available within the RSVP partner agency portfolio.

Before a new partner is brought on, we will ensure they understand the benefits and demands of becoming a volunteer station and receive a commitment from them to meet our requirements, e.g., turning in member hours, providing job descriptions, and collecting and transferring data required for grant compliance/reports. This criteria is also spelled out clearly in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) we have with each station, and which meets CNCS requirements. An MOU is only established with a site if the opportunities they provide are appropriate, they show an understanding of working with volunteers age 55 and older, they indicate a willingness to enter into a supportive and ongoing working relationship, and they meet CNCS criteria (public agency, nonprofit,

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proprietary health care). Additionally, we make it clear to agencies that volunteers cannot displace employees and discuss volunteer safety, training and accessibility and reasonable accommodations.

Communication is crucial to good station management. All stations are visited at least annually to update information and review service descriptions and current needs. We further maintain contact with our partners via regular phone calls, emails about educational and recognition opportunities, and networking at nonprofit meetings. We recently have collaborated with another agency to start the Nonprofit Picnic Table, which is designed to build relationships by bringing together nonprofit leaders in an informal atmosphere.

Through our ongoing partner education efforts, we encourage development of assignments that meet urgent community needs and are not only interesting to potential volunteers, but also recognize the changing nature of older volunteers such as shorter, more episodic volunteer positions or shared assignments.

Volunteers all meet RSVP age restrictions.

### CAPACITY TO RECRUIT AND MANAGE VOLUNTEER STATIONS OUTSIDE PRIMARY FOCUS AREA

As an existing RSVP, we already have the capacity to recruit and manage volunteer stations meeting all variety of needs; we have a long history of successfully doing this. Most of the contact with current and potential partners is done by the director. In addition to calls and site visits, she regularly sees many partners at nonprofit meetings such as the Ventura County Volunteer Coordinator Council (where she is a past president) and the Nonprofit Leadership Council (where she serves on the steering committee). This involvement allows progress/assessment on two levels: 1) the program remains in continual contact with its partners and 2) it provides a comprehensive understanding of community needs and new programs being developed. The program also holds

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membership in the Southern California RSVP Directors Association, where program-specific information is shared, including updates from CNCS staff.

It should be noted that, before there were National Performance Measures, we focused most of our efforts within what has become our Primary Focus Area. Previous to the recession, hunger was an issue in our service area, and with the burgeoning senior population, unmet needs will only grow.

### GRADUATE VOLUNTEER STATIONS

We have gradually dropped stations over the past decade, reducing from over 100 partners to just about 40 today as we focused on massing our volunteers to meet the keenest needs in our communities. The few that we will 'graduate' this year would have been dropped without the new RSVP guidelines due to 1) our inability to interest members in being placed there or 2) the station does not comply with our requirements to submit needed information (hours, job descriptions, new MOUs).

The few volunteers placed at these agencies (2 in total) will be informed of the situation and provided the opportunity to discuss other options with us.

### OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS ARE MEASURED AND COLLECTED

In preparing to write this grant, we discussed the need for certain information -- primarily the output data -- with our partners and had them describe how they collected that information. Prior to the start of the new grant year, we will hold a series of meetings with our partner agencies to detail changes in the program and review our expectations. This will be an opportunity to further train our partners; call it RSVP 2.0. A letter will also be sent to each describing what we need from them as partners.

The outcomes on which we will report are ones for which data is routinely collected, e.g., when our

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county food bank surveys the Brown Bag recipients each year and gathers information regarding impact on food security, we receive the written survey results.

Within our office we use database software, Volunteer Reporter, that allows us to record and manage statistics related to members and partner agencies. The vendor has typically updated the software annually to help projects more readily meet CNCS regulations. Within our office, the RSVP secretary inputs information from volunteer registration forms, individual timesheets and station logs on a monthly basis, thus providing an up-to-date and accurate view of the number of active volunteers, their hours and assignments.

Reporter allows us to export data to show the impact of the project's members on community need. It allows us to pull information using different criteria, such as for a specified time period, by partner agency, performance measure, or by volunteer. We generate monthly logs for large agencies using the timesheets found in Reporter, which helps us collect hours more efficiently. Our IS Department has provided instruction on how to backup Reporter's database on the City's hard drive.

### MANAGING PROJECT RESOURCES, BOTH FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND

The City of Oxnard is a municipal government and the largest city in Ventura County. All financial transactions follow specified protocol and must meet the exacting standards of a city finance department. Their procedures, e.g., purchase orders must have supporting documentation, ensure accountability.

The finance department issues monthly expenditure and revenue reports, allowing the RSVP Director to monitor the budget and make sure funds are being spent effectively.

Oxnard RSVP's budget does not include any in-kind resources.

### Organizational Capability

### SOUND PROGRAMMATIC AND FISCAL OVERSIGHT, DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

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### AND DATA COLLECTION

This program is sponsored by a city where there is a well-established hierarchy. The RSVP director reports to the senior services supervisor who in turn reports to the assistant to the city manager who answers to the city manager. And ultimately, the city manager reports to the City Council and the electorate. The City provides support/oversight to RSVP as it does to any other city program. Our financial accounts operate as part of the City's financial system and are governed by the same rules as all city accounts. Within our office we have continuous clerical and administrative support.

Data collection is an important function of our office. Volunteers and partners turn in volunteer hours monthly. Outcome-based assignments have surveys distributed annually and the data from them is recorded and analyzed. Information for RSVP-directed programs, such as STAGES, will be gathered monthly on an Excel spreadsheet for annual analysis and reports. Our partners are charged with collecting data related to their programs and providing this information to the RSVP office.

### CLEARLY DEFINED STAFF POSITIONS

There are five staff positions associated with this grant: the director, volunteer coordinator, 2 clerical assistants and a program coordinator. All staff must pass a criminal background check before being employed by the City.

The RSVP director is the liaison with our partner agencies, determining which agencies meet CNCS criteria, which continue to work toward meeting existing community needs, and if they fill a hole in the partner portfolio. Most communication with the agencies also moves through this position. The director also interviews all new volunteers, helps them with placement and drives the work of the RSVP advisory council. She directs all activity surrounding the grant. This is a second stint as RSVP Director for Marisue Eastlake. She served for two years, before leaving for a year as Assistant Senior Services Manager in a nearby city. She has been back as Oxnard's RSVP Director for almost seven

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years. Previously, Ms. Eastlake spent 10 years as a newspaper reporter, providing her with many contacts in the community and a deep understanding of its needs and resources. She has valuable volunteer experience serving seniors through the Meals on Wheels program and as a member of volunteer boards over the years.

RSVP clerical help does all input of hours and new volunteers into our database, Volunteer Reporter, and is often the initial point of contact for inquiries. Office secretary Caroline Gambala works part-time for RSVP and has been with Senior Services for many years.

Our volunteer coordinator provides administrative support, ensuring receipt of hours, contacting those who haven't reported on their service and helps on follow-up calls related to placement. She also organizes our special events volunteers. Volunteer Coordinator Martha Jimenez has served for two years. Her bilingual abilities have brought a needed skill to the program.

Our STAGES coordinator will oversee the specific programmatic details related to that area. He is charged with training, adding new classes/programs and volunteer recruitment and retention within his area. Johnny Suniga spent 30 years working for our federal government, including overseeing program quality assurance, and has worked in recreation for several years since his retirement.

Our STAGES clerical help creates monthly rosters and provides general support for the training.

These positions will be sustained through grant, matching and City general funds.

### TRACK RECORD IN PRIMARY FOCUS AREA, SENIOR SERVICES, MANAGING VOLUNTEERS AND MEASURING PERFORMANCE

Service in the Primary Focus Area concentrates on senior issues and combating hunger in the senior and general population. We have partnered with FOOD Share -- the county's largest food bank -- to recruit and place volunteers in positions to fight hunger since that organization was founded over 30 years ago. We have a close, collaborative relationship. The City has a large senior services program,

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which includes RSVP, three senior centers, a senior nutrition program, a senior vegetable garden, and a recreational lawn bowling facility. Serving seniors and initiating programs to meet their special needs is intrinsic to the work of the Senior Services Division.

The City of Oxnard has sponsored RSVP for the past 35 years, and hence has decades of experience in this program area, including recruiting, retaining and managing volunteers; working with partner agencies; and maintaining appropriate records to tell the story of our impact. We have successfully recruited and placed approximately 100 new volunteers every year for the past 10 years, while also thanking them and recognizing their service. RSVP is not the City's only volunteer program, as there is also a highly successful youth volunteer program, which has been in existence almost 20 years. Although the two programs serve different populations, they do collaborate occasionally. Throughout its history, this RSVP office has continued to offer older adults interesting and challenging opportunities to serve.

RSVP offices have had to measure and report on the impact of volunteer service for quite some time. This office has done that, meeting targets and showing impact each year. We recently received a Program of National Significance augmentation based, in part, on our ability to show the impact of our programming.

### **STRONG ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

For all of its 35-year tenure under the City of Oxnard's sponsorship, this office has operated out of the Recreation and Community Services Department, and, in particular, Senior Services. The department has a general fund budget of over \$5 million, and the City is financially stable despite recent economic troubles in the country and state. The largest sources of general fund revenue are taxes on property, sales, franchise and transient occupancy (hotels), as well as vehicle and business license fees. While most of these revenue streams have decreased in recent years, the City is fortunate

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to have a new half-cent sales tax approved by voters which will bring in new revenue.

The RSVP program is situated in the Senior Services Office and has its own fully furnished office. All employees have their own computers and desks and there are adequate supplies to run the program. A skilled tech staff maintains and regularly upgrades technical equipment, and staff is available for technical assistance, as well. Any computer-related purchases are made through this department.

The City has an Administrative Manual with over 100 internal policies governing everything from technology to travel. All City policies are reviewed regularly and available to employees on the city's main shared server, which is accessible from each desk computer. When updates are issued, they are dispersed via email to all employees. There is a policy to guide travel that includes procedures for approving travel and reimbursable expenses.

The City has a Purchasing Manual with well-defined and regulated purchasing policies and procedures, and a purchasing division within the Finance Department. All purchases are reviewed by that department and receipts are required for any reimbursements.

The City also has a Human Resources Department, which is responsible for administering Human Resources policy, procedures, and practices. They provide vision and leadership to promote an environment that values excellence, diversity, autonomy, creativity, and productivity at all levels of the organization.

The RSVP Advisory Council has been in existence since the inception of the program. Today it consists of seven members, representing volunteers, stations and community leaders. They advise and assist the program in a variety of ways, including meeting CNCS programmatic requirements, assessing community needs, resource development, and recognition strategies.

The City of Oxnard uses the Sungard Public Sector financial management system. We are guided by a series of administrative and financial policies as well as state and federal regulations. Checks and

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balances are maintained. The city is audited annually and is subject to A133 audit.

The RSVP grant is not the only federal grant managed here. Other past and present federal assistance includes FEMA disaster grants, Community Development Block grants (Housing and Urban Development), Department of Justice grants, and ARRA Stimulus grants from the federal departments of energy, transportation and justice.

Funds to sustain the required non-federal share of this grant will come from the City of Oxnard general fund, which is allocated annually by the City Council.

### **Other**

NA

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

NA