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Executive Summary

An estimated 450 Steuben County RSVP volunteers will serve; 255 of which will serve in the Primary Focus Area' "Healthy Futures". They will assist seniors to age in place by providing transportation, home-delivered meals, and companionship. They will also serve as Bone Builder leaders and support food pantries throughout the county. Volunteers will serve at approximately 30 sites across the county such as Meals on Wheels, ProAction Home Delivered Meals, Steuben Coordinated Transportation, Faith in Action, Project Care, and food pantries through Catholic Charities, Steuben Rural Ministry, Salvation Army, and other faith-based organizations. At the end of the 3-year performance period, 393 seniors will have increased social support by receiving the independent living services of food delivery, transportation, and companionship, 850 individuals will receive emergency food, and 250 individuals will participate in the Bone Builders program. The CNCS federal investment of \$65,268 will be supplemented by \$99,406 of non-federal resources.

Strengthening Communities

Steuben County RSVP serves a very large, mostly rural area located in the Southern Tier of New York State, near the Pennsylvania border. It is actually larger than the state of Rhode Island. The population of Steuben County, according to the 2010 Census is 98,990. Steuben County residents age 65+ make up 16.1% of the population (the New York average is 13.7%). The county is broken up into three main areas -- Hornell and surrounding towns/villages in the western part of the county, Bath and surrounding towns/villages in central Steuben and Corning and surrounding towns/villages in the eastern part of the county. The Steuben County Integrated Planning document 2007 -- 2009, compiled by the Institute for Human Services in Bath and the Steuben County Dept. of Social Services, states that the most rapid growth nationally between 2000 and 2015 is expected to occur among the oldest and frailest of our population. The 85+ cohort is expected to grow 28.2% from 4.3 million to 19.4 million. According to the same report, this trend is borne out in Steuben County as

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well. Senior population increase projections for Steuben County from 2000-2015, show a 29% increase in those 60+ and 54.4 % increase in the 85+population. The number of chronic limitations in the 65+ age group in Steuben County also points to a critical need to be addressed. Research by AARP's Public Policy Institute has found 89% of people age 55+ want to remain in their homes as they age. Steuben Senior Services Fund, Inc. completed a county-wide survey in 2010 of seniors asking the needed services to allow them to age in place. Transportation was the number one identified need with grocery shopping, in-home services, and home delivered meals appearing in the top eight identified needs.

The current economic situation in Steuben County has led to a dramatic increase in the number of families who are using food pantries during this past year. According to the Food Bank of the Southern Tier's latest report, "Hunger in America 2010", 1 out of every 8 residents of the Southern Tier is seeking food assistance. 79% of food pantries in the area reported an increase in the requests for food assistance. Every week, over 10,700 individuals access emergency food programs in the Southern Tier. Of those individuals/households, 59% are food insecure and 25% are experiencing hunger. 39% had to choose between paying for food and utilities/heating fuel, 29% had to choose between food and rent/mortgage, and 35% had to choose between food and medicine/medical care. In addition, 75% of food pantries rely entirely on volunteers to meet this increasing need and run the operation. The pantries are also seeing "The New Face of Hunger"; 77% of clients have completed high school, 41% own their own homes, and 29% of those interviewed currently hold or have held managerial or professional jobs.

Steuben RSVP will be celebrating our 40th year of service in Steuben County in 2013. We are sponsored by the Steuben County Office for Aging so the "Healthy Futures" Aging in Place focus area was a natural fit for our agencies, our volunteers, and the individuals in need of service. We have a long history of working with providers of transportation, in-home services, home delivered meals

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agencies, food pantries, and Bone Builder leaders. Most of our RSVP volunteers currently serve as home delivered meals drivers, drivers for medical appointments, in-home/companionship activities, food pantry workers, and bone builder leaders in groups throughout the county.

The older population in Steuben County is larger than the state average and is growing as baby boomers reach retirement age. Most seniors want to remain in their own homes as long as possible and there is a need for increased in-home services, transportation, and home delivered meals for that to occur. Our county is also large, poor, and rural, and food pantries have all had a sharp rise in requests in the last few years. Continued unemployment and increased taxes in New York State have made it difficult to meet the basic human needs of their families. Because of our volunteers' service, older residents will get the support they need in their homes, older individuals will stave off frailty, falls, and bone loss by participating in the Bone Builders program, and county residents will receive emergency food as needed.

Many veterans are currently recipients of home delivered meals, transportation services, and companionship under our current program. Food pantries do not ask recipients if they are veterans, but they suspect that many of them are.

Recruitment and Development

It is the job of the volunteer coordinator to sit down and discuss how each volunteer wants to use their skills. That is the unique quality of the RSVP program - someone spends the time to find out how the potential new volunteer wants to become involved. This is not necessarily how it works through the online volunteer matching process. A new volunteer may come to RSVP with an idea of what they want to do from the volunteer opportunities listed in the newspaper or they may not have an idea at all but, after meeting with the volunteer coordinator, filling out the application and skills sheet, and discussing the opportunities available related to the skills they either have or want to explore, they might leave with several new possibilities to explore. This meeting is critical to a good placement and

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the follow-up conversations helps to determine if it has been a good fit. A good match is going to enhance the quality of the volunteer's life. It is our job to make sure it is a good match. In the past year RSVP has employed the following strategies to recruit volunteers: the Volunteer Coordinator has spoken to Bone Builder groups throughout the county, the Volunteer Coordinator has spoken with major employers in the county to give RSVP information in retirement packets and to post on their websites, participated in Aging in Place events throughout the county to promote RSVP, post volunteer opportunities in newspapers county-wide monthly, place articles in the local newspapers on a variety of topics to promote volunteerism, replying promptly to contacts made through Volunteer Match, participating in other agency's volunteer fairs, meeting with partner agencies to provide a range of options for volunteer opportunities ranging from opportunities for individuals with limitations to leadership roles, follow-up phone calls with active volunteers to review activities and discuss new assignments that are developed or have become available.

Each volunteer receives basic training of the RSVP process through the one-to-one session with the Volunteer Coordinator. They are also invited to an annual orientation where more specifics of the program are discussed, and volunteers have a chance to share with other volunteers their unique experiences. The MOUs we have with our partner agencies indicate that the agencies are responsible for training volunteers in regards to their specific assignments. For many years we have sent our partner agencies a quarterly newsletter that includes articles/suggestions for effective training, communication, recruitment, and recognition of volunteers. Locally, RSVP staff are members of the Volunteer Administrators of the Southern Tier (VATT). This organization provides workshops and information for members. Topics for some of the workshops include risk management, record keeping, recruitment, retention and recognition of volunteers, and working with 211. Many of the non-profit agencies that we have MOU's with are members of VATT.

Steuben County is a rural county in upstate New York with very little diversity; 95.3% of the

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population is white and less than 5% of the population speaks a language other than English in their home. We are reaching out to the veterans in the community not only to assist them in finding services, but also to recruit them to assist others. Our Volunteer Coordinator has recently joined the VA's VAVS committee and will be working with approximately 30 agencies throughout the county to explore the future possibilities with veterans. We currently have some volunteers through the Arc of Steuben who have developmental disabilities. Their individual program plans include volunteer opportunities as a goal to give back to the community in which they live. We also have older individuals with age-related disabilities who volunteer as they can in their senior living facilities and also as callers for telephone reassurance to other seniors.

Recognition of volunteers is a very important part of what we do. We recently (January, 2012) received back a survey from volunteers and one of the questions was about the types of recognition they wanted to receive. We are finding fewer volunteers want the big event that many RSVP programs host annually but we don't see it going away too soon because there are a good number that do attend. This will change eventually. However, many want simple recognition such as a thank you here and there on the job - noticing that it was a good job done. Along with our annual recognition event, we recognize volunteers during National Volunteer Week. Volunteers who are in nursing homes receive a visit and gift such as flowers. Active volunteers will be recognized this year in a one page section of three county newspapers and honorary volunteers will receive notes sent by advisory council members and staff. Annually, RSVP sends out a survey to volunteers. Some of the questions include a rating (changed negatively, not changed, or changed positively) of how the volunteer experience has changed their life in relationship to their sense of accomplishment, sense of purpose, making a difference in another person's life, sense of well-being, sense of self-esteem, and overall quality of life. We also ask if they are satisfied with their current assignment, the RSVP placement process, the impact in the community that the volunteer makes, training received, and cooperation

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they received from RSVP.

Program Management

In terms of managing volunteer stations, our work is to create a relationship with non-profit agencies and organizations within the county that request our help in getting volunteers. We meet with these agencies and provide information about RSVP, how we recruit volunteers and review the Memorandum of Understanding and responsibilities of both parties. If the agency wants our assistance, they will sign the MOU which we keep on file and renew every three years. Later this year, we will be changing our "standard" MOUs to better reflect the expectations of the new RSVP program and to ensure that critical outcome information is collected and reported. Our plan is to meet with our focus area partner agencies individually to explain the new direction for RSVP and to ensure that our relationship will remain strong. A lot of public relations work and a little "TLC" will be needed in the coming year to ensure the least amount of disruption to partner agencies and volunteers. Quarterly, an agency newsletter is sent to provide information on taking care of volunteers, recruitment and retention and information on upcoming events. Agencies and volunteers are spotlighted so that we do our part in getting the word out about agencies and their needs. Keeping RSVP connected, on all levels, has enabled us to provide the most current information for agencies we work with and learn about programs that are meeting current community needs in our community. Working closely with CNS, the State Office for the Aging, the Steuben County Office for the Aging, the United Way of the Southern Tier, the Volunteer Administrators of the Southern Tier (VATT) and other organizations is how we gain information to help us in developing quality volunteer assignments for our volunteers that may lie outside of the Primary Focus Area. RSVP is not an agency that can go it alone. Networking is critical to what we do. Ideas have flowed at meetings with the New York State Senior Corps Association, VATT, United Way Community Solutions Teams and other gatherings that have given us much to work with in going forward to meet the needs of the community. The State

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Office for the Aging Empowering Communities Grant has provided opportunities to discover how we can work with entities on the state level to accomplish things locally.

We have many plans to responsibly graduate volunteer stations to meet our changing community needs and to minimize disruptions to current volunteers. We have already started some discussions with our sponsor, Steuben County Office for Aging, and with 2-1-1's Give Help program through our local United Way regarding the referral and absorption of some of our volunteers. We are also considering using other funding sources (not CNCS funds) to continue recognition activities for those volunteers that have been part of RSVP for a number of years. We will look into developing capacity building assignments at some of our partner agencies as well. The key to a successful transition is open communication with volunteers and partner agencies. Our plan is to meet individually with graduating partner agencies so that we can work together to ensure success for both programs and to ensure that they understand the new national performance measures.

We will also be meeting individually with partner agencies that we will continue to work with. As stated above, we will be looking at changing the MOUs to clearly reflect the expectations in reporting outcomes and outputs and to tailor them to each partner agency in the focus areas.

The RSVP Advisory Council finance committee is a resource we use to ensure accountability. On an annual basis, the project director meets with the committee to review the budget. Both CNS and Steuben County have written policies and procedures that ensure accountability and efficient and effective use of available resources. With the county, all items over \$250 have to go through the Purchasing Dept. for approval. Anything under \$250 has to be sent to the Treasurer's Dept. for approval. All requests are signed by the Project Director first, and larger requests have to be signed by the sponsor agency director and the county administrator. In order to secure additional funds for the program, RSVP hosts one or two fundraising trips each year. We have explored other avenues of raising funds but, with limited staff, we can only commit to this activity. Along with Steuben County's

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cash contribution to the program, reflected in the budget, the Office for the Aging has been very generous with in-kind contributions that have been critical to maintaining our program. OFA provides space for satellite offices in Hornell and Corning. There has never been a charge for that space. We pay for telephone lines and cable in these offices but OFA provides the space. We also receive a page in the OFA Second Season Newsletter that goes out to approximately 10,000 seniors in Steuben County. This newsletter goes out every few months. We also have access to quality equipment that we would not have otherwise and shared supplies. These are only a few of the benefits we receive from the relationship with our sponsoring agency.

Organizational Capability

RSVP in Steuben County has been in operation since 1972; 2013 will mark our 40th year. During that time, the program has had three project directors who have been committed to working closely with the Corporation for National and Community Service (previously ACTION), to ensure that we have good quality programming for seniors in Steuben County. Two of the directors were with the program for over 10 years each and the current director for a little over 14. The fact that we have had few turnovers in directors over the years adds to the stability of the program. The mission of the Office for the Aging (OFA), the sponsoring agency of RSVP, is "to enable persons age sixty and older to continue living independently in a safe environment by providing information about available community resources, access and referral to appropriate services and advocacy as needed". The OFA is uniquely positioned to contribute to the accomplishment of RSVP's stated mission. For over 25 years, OFA has successfully overseen programs and services designed to meet the needs of Steuben County residents with an annual budget totaling over \$2 million. Our Primary Focus Area, Healthy Futures, is most focused on Aging in Place Services. Obviously, since our sponsor is the Office for Aging, we have extensive experience in this area as well as senior service. The sponsor executive has had over 30 years of administrative experience as a project director for RSVP and OFA director. In addition, she

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has served in numerous leadership capacities on the boards of a variety of human service agencies. Last year, we experienced a few changes with the retirement of the Director of the Office for the Aging. Although she chose to retire at that time, she was able to continue to work with OFA in a part time capacity. She is sharing some responsibilities with the new director and one of those responsibilities will be to continue supervision of RSVP. We have been doing impact programming for 10 years with performance measures and outcomes. Since we also receive United Way funding, we are required to measure and report on performance to them as well.

Key staff positions for RSVP are Project Director (grants and project administration), Account Clerk Typist (recording keeping, budget monitoring, CNS fiscal reports, etc.) , Impact Program Specialist (assists with development of impact statements, public relations and oversight of Citizen Corps Council) and Volunteer Coordinator (covers all three areas of Steuben County -- Corning, Bath, Hornell and outlying areas). The Project Director position is currently vacant due to retirement. The Impact Program Specialist has had years of human services experience with Steuben and Yates County ARCs and she gained experience with grant writing, web design and publicity with the Southern Tier library system. She has been with Steuben RSVP for nine years. The Account Clerk Typist position is currently vacant due to retirement. The Volunteer Coordinator was hired in March, 2011 and has been covering all three areas of the county.

Being under the umbrella of a county agency such as Steuben County has made it easy for us to have a good financial management system. Everything we do fiscally goes through the county treasurer's office and monthly we receive financial statements that are reviewed with the information we have on incoming funds and expenditures. The sponsoring agency director has over 25 years' experience in managing federal grant funds. Being under the Office for the Aging, we receive many benefits which includes the use of the copiers, printers, copy paper, etc. The county IT department supplies new computers and technical assistance as needed. It is great to know that help is a quick phone call away

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on any issue related to our computers. Personnel Management support is excellent and trainings are provided for directors and supervisors. Space has always been provided for RSVP as an in-kind contribution in the Corning, Bath and Hornell offices. Your organization's procedures or systems for self-assessment, evaluation, and continuous improvement: RSVP staff work with the advisory council program planning to determine methods of evaluation. This year (2012) we conducted a community needs assessment with the Advisory Council in preparation for re-competition in 2013. Annually, RSVP staff send out surveys to agency directors and volunteers to gain input and ideas for improving our program. We also put together annual goals and objectives that staff and advisory council review.

Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A