

PART I - FACE SHEET

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction														
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to confirm to the Corporation's eGrants System)																
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS): 10/17/12	3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:														
2b. APPLICATION ID: 13SR144193	4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY: 10/17/12	FEDERAL IDENTIFIER:														
5. APPLICATION INFORMATION																
LEGAL NAME: Volunteers of America Minnesota DUNS NUMBER: 020504056	NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Kelly O'Brien															
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 7625 Metro Boulevard Minneapolis MN 55439 - 3053 County:	TELEPHONE NUMBER: (952) 945-4160 FAX NUMBER: (952) 945-4105 INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: kobrien@voamn.org															
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 411554078	7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit 7b. Community-Based Organization															
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> A. AUGMENTATION B. BUDGET REVISION C. NO COST EXTENSION D. OTHER (specify below):	9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: Corporation for National and Community Service															
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER: 94.002 10b. TITLE: Retired and Senior Volunteer Program	11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Volunteers of America of MN RSVP															
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): Minnesota RSVP Opportunity Area #6 11 counties in east, central Minnesota: Carver, Chisago,	11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):															
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 04/01/13 END DATE: 03/31/16	14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="MN 003"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="MN 005"/>															
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: 1	16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS? <input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON: DATE: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372															
<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%; border: none;">a. FEDERAL</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: right;">\$ 287,827.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">b. APPLICANT</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: right;">\$ 140,017.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">c. STATE</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: right;">\$ 99,108.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">d. LOCAL</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: right;">\$ 40,909.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">e. OTHER</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">f. PROGRAM INCOME</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">g. TOTAL</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: right;">\$ 427,844.00</td> </tr> </table>	a. FEDERAL	\$ 287,827.00	b. APPLICANT	\$ 140,017.00	c. STATE	\$ 99,108.00	d. LOCAL	\$ 40,909.00	e. OTHER	\$ 0.00	f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00	g. TOTAL	\$ 427,844.00	17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
a. FEDERAL	\$ 287,827.00															
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g. TOTAL	\$ 427,844.00															
18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.																
a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: Robert Lovegrove	b. TITLE: CFO	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (952) 945-4041														
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:		e. DATE SIGNED: 10/17/12														

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Executive Summary

"Unselfish and noble acts are the most radiant epochs in the biography of souls." So wrote David Thomas (1813--1894), an English preacher and publisher. Volunteers of America -- Minnesota (VOA -- MN) brings a 116-year history illuminated by radiant stories of selfless giving in the volunteerism that constitutes our organizational DNA. We approach the Corporation for National and Community Service for a three-year grant to continue the RSVP program we have developed so that it will continue to flourish, engaging communities, individuals and families in connecting resources to people in need of life-affirming support.

VOA -- MN's RSVP program presents a three-year plan to improve lives, strengthen Minnesota communities and foster civic participation in 11 counties. We will recruit, train and support volunteers 55 years and older in rendering services to a broad spectrum of people and organizations seeking this invaluable support. In total, an estimated 703 RSVP volunteers will serve. VOA --MN's Primary Focus Area is Healthy Futures. To secure Healthy Futures, 434 volunteers will provide services in four strategic objectives: 1)home-bound older adults and individuals with disabilities will report increased food security; 2)our clients will report increased social ties, both through a) activities that protect independent living and aging in place, and b) activities that increase auto safety training and adjustments for seniors; and 3) Bone Builders programs that will improve health and increase strength. We present a vibrant network of partners including the Veterans Administration, County Veteran's Service Offices, AARP, TPT, the Area Agencies on Aging, Meals on Wheels, and Chore and Companion Services. We will engage 84 program sites such as food banks, community homes and accessible locations throughout the rural and urban 11-county area. At the end of the three-year grant, we anticipate measurable outcomes of increased household food security; increased social ties and support for elders and people with disabilities; and increased physical strength for seniors. The CNCS federal investment of \$287,827 will be supplemented by \$140,017.

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Strengthening Communities

"I was taught that the world had a lot of problems; that I could struggle and change them; that intellectual and material gifts brought the privilege and responsibility of sharing with others less fortunate; and that service is the rent each of us pays for living, the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time or after you have reached your personal goals."

This sentiment of Marion Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund, defines Volunteers of America -- Minnesota's commitment to the RSVP program and indeed, the entirety of our work in the community. VOA-MN positively impacts the lives of almost 25,000 children, families, and seniors each year in the Twin Cities metro area and in central Minnesota. VOA-MN responds to society's most pressing needs such as mental health, prison reform and re-entry and supporting seniors and people with special needs. We are affiliated with Volunteers of America--a national, faith-based organization that helps more than 2 million people annually live healthy, safe and productive lives.

Our mission is to help people gain self-reliance, dignity and hope. Our operational framework resounds with a striving toward excellence in all programs and services, strategic alignment with the changing needs of the communities we serve and a commitment to health as a fundamental right for all. As an organization, we take the meaning of the word "volunteer" seriously -- it is our choice to engage in activity that transforms a situation of inequity, ill health, and struggle into a dynamic of positive growth, and holistic well-being.

The eleven-county territory that VOA -- MN RSVP desires to serve presents serious and increasing levels of poverty, unemployment, home foreclosures, public safety issues, crises in community health and a host of other pressing needs that we can help address. Our Primary Focus Area is Healthy Futures, and the community profile of our service area clearly indicates significant social, economic

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and family trauma:

Poverty: In our service area, poverty among people of all ages ranges from 4.7 percent in Carver and Scott Counties, to 5.1 percent in Washington and 5.6 percent in Dakota County; 7.1 percent in Chisago and 8.9 percent in Isanti Counties; and Hennepin, Pine and Kannebec Counties from 12.1 -- 12.5 percent; to 14 percent in Pine County and 15.8 percent in Ramsey County (2006 -- 2010 Census Data). It is worth noting that Minnesota has the fifth largest poverty rate in the nation for African American children (47%) and the highest for Asian American children (22%). Within the last decade in Minnesota, poverty among children has doubled, and the poverty rate for all people of color in our state is 26.2%, according to the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition.

The population of elders in our region is also growing significantly. Scott County has a population that is 8 percent people age 65 and older; Carver County -- 8.7 percent; Dakota County -- 10.4 percent; Washington County -- 11 percent; Hennepin County -- 11.5 percent; Ramsey County -- 12.2 percent; Chisago County -- 12.4 percent; Isanti County -- 12.9 percent; Mille Lacs County -- 16.4 percent and each of Pine and Kannebec County 16.7 percent. Overall in Minnesota, a state with 13 percent of its population over age 65, 11 percent of seniors live under the federal Poverty Level and higher for women, particularly for women of color. While 30 percent of the State's population lives in rural areas, 41 percent of those over age 65 live in rural Minnesota.

For our elders, poverty and the economic crisis, as well as physical and mental health, are serious indicators of need for volunteer services and support. The number of people 85 and over will nearly triple by 2050. In Minnesota hunger has doubled in five years. Hunger Free Minnesota's Missing Meals Report states that "Minnesotans are missing 125 million meals each year--a full 12 percent of their meals...low-income Minnesotans provide for 61 percent of their own meals out of their own pockets; they obtain 22 percent from government programs; and they obtain five percent from non-profit sources." Less than half of people eligible for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program

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(SNAP) access this support, primarily seniors who are not aware that they are eligible, feel daunted by the application and fear the stigma of "food stamps."

Food Shelves in Minnesota are seeing an unprecedented demand. The USDA reports that roughly 10 percent of Minnesota households are food insecure. Food shelves often fill that gap but they too are strapped. The Hunger in Minnesota study conducted by Feeding America and Mathematica Policy Research reports that "85 percent of food pantries/shelves noted an increase in the number of clients seeking emergency hunger relief over the past five years and 71 percent of soup kitchens reported an increase in the number of clients."

With people aging, living longer and poverty a primary factor among elders, support for independent living will be increasingly important. According to the report *Elders Living on the Edge* conducted by the Minnesota Women's Consortium, "the average Social Security payment for a single Minnesota retiree does not allow economic security in any of the state's counties, regardless of whether the elder is a renter or a homeowner. In 2008, a typical Minnesota renter who relied entirely on a local average Social Security payment for men fell more than \$3,800 short of economic security. A typical Minnesota renter who relied entirely on the local average Social Security for women fell nearly \$8,000 short of economic security. Even so, these payments were high enough to disqualify Minnesota elders from receiving critical public assistance."

The Minnesota Women's Foundation's report *Status of Women and Girls in Minnesota* indicates that "seventy-four percent (74%) of Native American, 49% of Hispanic/Latina, 54% of African American, and 40% of Asian female-headed households fall below the federal poverty line." The report asserts that "overall senior women in Minnesota are at higher risk than senior men of falling below income levels needed to maintain homes and meet basic needs. Statewide, more than twice as many women over 65 than men live below the poverty line, earning just over \$11,233 a year in social security benefits. Over the next two decades, the number of senior women in Minnesota is expected to

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almost double."

In terms of disability, the Minnesota Department of Health reports that about one in every six Minnesotans reports at least one kind of disability. The percentage of persons with disabilities rises gradually during childhood and adult years and escalates rapidly after age 70. More than 70 percent of people 85 years old or older reported at least one type of disability. Of adults between the ages of 18 -- 64, 14 percent have one or more disability.

Diversity: Our region is also one of increasing ethnic and cultural diversity. Minnesota State Demographic Center reports that by 2035, non-whites and Latinos will make up 25 percent of the state's population. This 11-county region is home to the nation's largest urban Hmong population and the largest Somali population in the nation. Increasingly, refugees from Myanmar (formerly Burma), the Karen, are settling in Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Health reports that "racial and ethnic diversity within Minnesota's elderly population will increase over the next 30 years. Between 1995 and 2025, the proportion of Minnesota's elderly who are nonwhite will increase from 3.7 to 9.8 percent.

Veterans, Military Service Personnel and Families: According to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (2009) more than 400,000 Minnesota residents have served in the military, roughly 10 percent of the adult population. There are an estimated 23,000 post-September 11 veterans in Minnesota, with 5,000 of those unemployed in 2010 according to the U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee. At almost 23 percent, Minnesota's unemployment rate for veterans is the country's third highest. The state's rate is nearly twice the national average and more than three times the state's overall unemployment rate. Veterans face extremely difficult challenges in Minnesota: homelessness, mental illness (particularly Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, suicidal ideation and propensity toward domestic violence), physical effects of wartime injuries, the above-mentioned unemployment gap and family reunification difficulties.

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According to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, nearly half of all veterans of both genders are over age 55. The study reports that 4.1 percent or 16,400 Minnesota veterans had income below the poverty level (2007); and 44 percent of this group had a disability. "Likewise, veterans with income above the poverty level were more likely to have a disability than their non-veteran counterparts. Twenty-one percent of veterans above the poverty level had a disability, compared with 13 percent of non-veterans." The study also indicates that "In 2007 Minnesota veterans between 18 and 64 years old had an 80.5 percent labor force participation rate, meaning that 80.5 percent of veterans were employed or available and actively seeking employment. Unemployment rates were slightly higher for veterans at 5.7 percent compared with 5.1 percent for non-veterans."

Geography and Population: In general, the 11-county service territory that VOA --MN proposes to serve has a population of just over 5 million, with 1.6 million residents in Hennepin and Ramsey counties alone. The service area, 11 counties covering 6,075 square miles, in east central Minnesota is diverse in economic, demographic and geographic features. It contains the largest, most densely populated urban areas, as well as rural communities, small towns and farms, several watershed districts, state and national parks. While the urban core and first ring suburbs of Ramsey and Hennepin counties contain the majority of the population, geographically they are only about 1/8 of the service area, at 777 square miles. Neighboring counties of Carver, Dakota, Scott and Washington are a mix of second tier and outer-ring suburbs, small towns, and rural areas and cover 1,754 square miles. Well over half of the geographic area, 3,544 square miles, is in the rural counties of Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Pine and Mille Lacs.

VOA -- MN RSVP Plan and Infrastructure to provide for Healthy Futures: The data presented above indicate a clear need for extensive deployment of volunteers throughout the geographic service area to assure Healthy Futures for all, particularly seniors, people with disabilities, economically

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disadvantaged individuals and families. VOA -- MN's RSVP planning process outlines an infrastructure to manage volunteers and stations that begins with the foundation of focusing program resources on: A) Identified, measurable local needs - being responsive to local needs will align RSVP with the goals of local funders and stakeholders, gaining their support and positioning the program to leverage those resources, both financial and in-kind. B) Volunteer roles that have research-based, measurable impact are able to engage volunteers in ways that make a measurable difference in issues of personal relevance, enticing citizens to participate enthusiastically. C) Mobilizing and connecting NEW volunteers and focusing on building and enhancing agency capacity by increasing volunteer resources, in ways that they are not able to do without RSVP support, builds trust and positions RSVP as a respected and valuable resource. Relationships built on this foundation create community partners that support and enhance the work of RSVP. D) Supporting and empowering agencies and volunteers in establishing long-term and sustaining volunteer relationships. By empowering agencies and volunteers to sustain volunteer roles and relationships, RSVP can focus resources on mobilizing NEW volunteers, further gaining community respect and support. E) Recruiting volunteers for roles that are typically very challenging to fill.

Focusing project resources on areas where agencies and stations need the most support positions RSVP as a valued and critical partner that agencies and their stakeholders support and advocate for. We have built a strong Advisory Council that guides our work. The Council includes staff from Hands On Twin Cities, the Center for Senior Citizens' Education, the University of Minnesota Extension Service, Senior Nutrition, We R Able, Onamia Fare For All and Senior Companions. RSVP Advisory Council members serve as connectors and advocates in the communities the project serves. Providing personalized consultations, RSVP staff enhance the capacity of station staff to fully utilize and integrate RSVP volunteers into their volunteer programs. RSVP and station staff partner to define criteria for success in the context of their agency mission and goals. MOU's, regular site visits,

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volunteer follow-up and surveys, and collection of impact data ensure that success is monitored in an on-going fashion, and plans for integration of RSVP volunteers into substantive roles are fully and successfully implemented.

VOA - MN RSVP staff provide personalized placement services to volunteers including a guided exploration of the volunteers' desire for skill building and leadership opportunities. RSVP staff support volunteers in identifying and articulating the components of their desired volunteer placement, including; their personal goals, passions and desired outcomes. Outcomes are viewed both in terms of the impact of volunteer work and the impact on the quality of the volunteers' own life. Identified criteria are discussed with station staff prior to a volunteer referral and/or placement being made. Volunteer follow-up, surveys, and data collection assure that the placement meets the volunteers' identified expectations. We believe that supporting and empowering both agencies and volunteers through training and consultations will establish long-term and mutually rewarding relationships. We strategically select and monitor stations to assure that we maintain strong relationships. While RSVP will provide on-going support and recognition to sustain volunteer engagement when needed, the majority of project resources will be dedicated to what the stake holders have identified as their greatest need - NEW volunteers.

VOA -- MN RSVP has developed an effective plan and organizational infrastructure to recruit, train, manage, support and evaluate a cadre of volunteers through our network of stations to address pressing needs. Our network of community partnerships is strong and effective, in large part due to the fact that we have developed clear and objective station criteria based in part on use of evidence and research-based practices. We propose four primary volunteer activities to secure Healthy Futures for our region:

* H8 -- Increasing Social Ties and Supports - Supporting seniors and adults with disabilities in maintaining independence and increasing social ties by providing transportation to medical

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appointments, assisting with home maintenance and accessibility modifications, delivering meals and/or groceries, friendly visits and other direct supports to home-bound adults, including delivery of home-based volunteer activities in which home-bound adults are provided the opportunity to stay engaged and give delivered by volunteers who also serve as social contact. We anticipate that 330 RSVP volunteers will serve through 35 sites, providing 40,000 hours of service to 700 individuals.

* H8 -- Increasing Social Ties and Supports - Volunteers will be trained as Car Fit Technicians, a program developed collaboratively by the AAA, AARP and the American Occupational Therapy Association to ameliorate an ill-fitting driving experience as drivers age. The Car Fit program helps older adults make adjustments to their seating, mirrors and steering wheels so that the behind-the-wheel experience is more comfortable and safer. 20 RSVP volunteers will facilitate 10 Car Fit events, serving 200 hours and 180 older drivers.

* H10 -- Increasing Food Security -- 130 RSVP volunteers will work with 25 sites that include area food shelves to sort and bag food, restock shelves, pick up and deliver food, assist with intake paperwork and grocery-shop so as to increase food security among disadvantaged populations. RSVP volunteers will contribute 11,000 hours of service to benefit 15,500 individuals.

* H4 -- Increasing Independent Living -- RSVP volunteers will be trained to lead the Bone Builders program, a weight-bearing exercise class designed to reduce risk of osteoporosis, help reduce falls and increase general health and strength in seniors. Stand Up and Be Strong testing will cover flexibility, range-of-motion and strength testing post-program, every six months for the first two years of the program. Bone Builders classes will be offered twice weekly at selected locations. 24 RSVP volunteers will render 2,400 hours of service to benefit 140 individuals.

Healthy Futures Service Activities leading to National Performance Measure Outputs and Outcomes:
The service activities described above represent assignment of 434 volunteers, or 62 percent of the

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total 703 RSVP volunteers we will recruit over three years. In our Primary Focus Area of Healthy Futures, we will produce these outcomes:

- * Number of individuals reporting increased food security -- 15,500
- * Number of home-bound or older adults and individuals with disabilities reporting increased social ties and social support -- 880
- * Although there is no CNCS outcome for Bone Builders, we anticipate 140 people served will report increased health, strength and range-of-motion.

In support of Veterans and Military Families, VOA -- MN will work with partners with proven expertise in deploying research-based best practices to support this challenged community. We are partnering with the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon campaign, the Disabled American Veterans, the VA Medical Center and the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs. Minnesota is unique across the nation to have the support of Beyond the Yellow Ribbon, singularly dedicated to supporting veterans. Volunteer activities include packing and sending care packages to deployed service people, driving veterans and family members to appointments, providing assistance in seeking employment and supporting camp, sports and other extra-curricular activities for the children of military families, who are in need of so much support. Volunteers will serve a minimum of four hours per month, with most serving four hours per week, with output of 12,500 veterans and their family members served, with an outcome of individuals reporting increased social support through volunteer activities totaling 25,000 hours served.

Integration of Community Need, Service Activities and Anticipated Outcomes/Outputs VOA -- MN RSVP has established that our 11-county service territory has significant need in terms of poverty, a growing community of elders, a significant percentage of people with disabilities and pervasive food insecurity. Our plan is to address Food Security and Independent Living/Aging in Place to create

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strategic outcomes and outputs in alignment with the CNCS strategic plan, with a total of 434 volunteers serving through 84 stations, providing 53,600 hours of service benefiting 16,520 individuals.

Recruitment and Development

Plan and Infrastructure to Create High-Quality Volunteer Assignments : VOA -- MN RSVP has professional staff that work cohesively to identify and create high-quality volunteer assignments based on documented community need and in alignment with the CNCS Strategic Plan. We have also trained five current RSVP volunteers as "Ambassadors" and will be training five additional Ambassadors. These "super" volunteers serve as recruiters of additional volunteers and increase public awareness of the program.

RSVP has instituted strategic selection criteria for stations including a requirement that evidence-based programming is used, which helped to create an infrastructure that assures a high quality experience for RSVP volunteers. Personalized placement services RSVP staff provide to volunteers include a guided exploration of the volunteers' desire for sharing their experiences, abilities and skills, as well as skill building and leadership opportunities. RSVP staff support volunteers in identifying and articulating the components of their desired volunteer placement, including their personal goals, passions and desired outcomes. We view outcomes both in terms of impact of the volunteer work on their communities and impact on the quality of the volunteers' own life. We discuss criteria with station staff prior to volunteer referral and/or placement being made. Volunteer follow-up, surveys, and data collection assure that the placement meets the volunteers' identified expectations. A core tenant of RSVP's volunteer management and recruitment is to engage volunteers in meaningful and impactful work. Volunteers are invited to participate in clearly articulated roles. Volunteer satisfaction is our greatest recruitment and retention tool. VOA - MN RSVP offers training and support to RSVP volunteers as they serve as hosts and ambassadors at community fairs, expos, and gatherings.

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Communications as a Recruitment Tool: As a VOA - MN program, RSVP benefits from visibility as one of the largest and oldest non-profit agencies in Minnesota, with a professional Communications Department providing assistance in building comprehensive, multi-faceted, public awareness tools. RSVP has a presence on the VOA - MN website, as well as a Minnesota Senior Corps Association website. In addition, RSVP has a Facebook page and a blog for each of the service areas. We issue Public Service Announcements on a monthly basis to local radio stations and newspapers. Our staff works to create a community presence through professionally designed flyers and personal involvement, such as serving on committees, hosting a table at exercise facilities, coffee shops and libraries. We represent the program at strategically chosen community events and expos, including the Hands On Twin Cities Volunteer Expo at Mall of America, the largest Volunteer Expo in the country. With limited financial resources, RSVP staff also seeks out " guerrilla marketing opportunities" including marching in community parades and handing out fans with RSVP information on them, attaching labels with RSVP info to donated bottles of water and handing them out to mall walkers, partnering with local restaurants to host neighborhood coffee and pie gatherings, and being present at other venues and events that cater to the target audience. RSVP serves as the referral and placement source for the volunteer engagement component of our Lt. Governor's One-Stop-Shop initiative.

Training: As one of the largest providers of senior service programs in the state, VOA - MN employs a diverse group of professional staff who bring a unique set of skills, contacts and credentials to the team. One method of insuring that RSVP volunteers had excellent training is an expectation that staff are well-trained. RSVP works closely with our Senior Mental Health program to gain skills in supporting volunteers with mental health. Peer-to-peer consultations and technical assistance are readily available to VOA - MN RSVP project staff. In addition, we schedule regular training sessions on a variety of topics in a spirit of continuous education and improvement. When specific training

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needs arise within RSVP, VOA - MN deploys staff with that area of expertise to create and provide customized training. For example, VOA -- MN has made a pivotal decision to adopt a Trauma-Informed Care model of practice that will impact each and every staff across all divisions (more than 725 employees). Trauma-Informed Care is becoming a transformational model of care that recognizes that the people we serve have more than not struggled with trauma in many forms, from domestic and sexual violence, poverty and homelessness, impacts of war and refugee status, and myriad other struggles. VOA -- MN is committed to training each staff person in this model of care, to better prepare RSVP staff to work with stations, community partners and volunteers.

In consultation with the supervisor, RSVP staff set annual professional development goals based on identified needs. As possible, VOA -- MN makes training dollars available for staff to access appropriate training. In addition, through varied and extensive community connections, staff learn from, and have opportunities to be mentored by other experts, professionals and leaders. In each learning format, staff gleans appropriate elements to create training and presentations that pass on knowledge to colleagues, as well as station staff and volunteers. We view active knowledge-sharing as a path to increase skills and empower stations, volunteers and other community partners.

In terms of RSVP volunteer training, our station MOUs require that volunteers receive proper training. We identify areas of need during MOU updates, station visits and volunteer surveys. In addition, extensive community connections developed and maintained by RSVP project staff position them well to be strategic connectors building coalitions and referring experts. We work to maximize resources and impact so that RSVP staff, stations and volunteers receive the training needed to be effective in their work to meet community needs. Our email newsletter serves as a continual training mechanism and also a way for volunteers to keep in touch. We ensure that follow-up is conducted to determine that goals and needs were met and that our service activities have the intended impact on CNCS strategic outcomes.

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Recruiting Volunteers from Diverse Communities: The Minnesota Association of Volunteer Administrators (MAVA) commissioned a study by Dr. Mai Moua of Leadership Paradigms regarding volunteerism in immigrant communities (2010). The report included recommendations to cultivate racial and cultural understanding, sensitivity, and proficiency and engage individuals in roles that benefit the collective, family-centered system prevalent in immigrant communities. VOA - MN operates a number of programs serving diverse communities, connecting RSVP effectively to build strong partnerships. Our Ambassadors are specifically recruited from diverse communities, and this provides opportunities to bring together members of immigrant and majority cultures in volunteer roles that support common goals. Our outreach and recruitment efforts will be culturally sensitive to seen and unseen differences. For those volunteers whose transportation expenses are a barrier to participation, RSVP will reimburse a portion of mileage cost. Home-bound individuals, who would otherwise be excluded from participation because of physical limitations, will be offered opportunities to assist with projects that can be done from their home, delivered by able-bodied volunteers who also serve as a social connector. In addition, our new partnership with the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Network is a critical foundation to connecting veterans, military personnel and their families with RSVP volunteer opportunities, including those that benefit other members of the military community.

Volunteer Recognition: RSVP plans volunteer recognition events regularly to appeal to and support our volunteers and we encourage stations to do the same. These events serve to recognize volunteers' contributions and offer an opportunity for volunteers to come together with peers to reflect on the impact of their work. RSVP also regularly solicits stories from volunteers, so that they are encouraged to reflect on and share their volunteer experiences. These stories, as well as overviews of the RSVP project's accomplishments and impacts are shared through Public Service Announcements, postings on blogs and websites, inclusion in flyers, print materials, newsletters, and in recruitment

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messages, highlighting and recognizing the accomplishments of the volunteer. In addition, RSVP has regular follow-ups with newly-placed volunteers and conducts surveys that provide volunteers with a structured forum in which to reflect on their experiences, and provides recognition of the value of their volunteer efforts.

Program Management

The VOA -- MN RSVP program is distinguished for its excellence:

- * We utilize research and evidence-based best practices and employ strict data gathering and measurement to show measurable outcomes.
- * We use objective criteria for selecting and engaging station partners.
- * We are developing and implementing a new strategic plan organization-wide and the RSVP program has already implemented a strategic plan in alignment with that of the CNCS.
- * As an incumbent program, we have created a long track record of success and innovation.
- * Our Advisory Council plays a unique role in assuring program effectiveness and dynamic ability to meet the changing needs of the communities we serve.
- * We are thoughtfully and respectfully increasing the diversity of our volunteers to meet our rapidly diversifying community.
- * We have added a program component serving Veterans and Military Families, in line with national priorities.
- * We have worked collaboratively with the Lieutenant Governor's office to ensure that the effectiveness of Senior Corps programs are maximized across the state.
- * As a National Learning Community for Trauma-Informed Care, we will work to implement this unique and critical perspective into our work with volunteers, who in turn work with many individuals and families affected by trauma.

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VOA -- MN's RSVP program serving volunteers, stations and services across the eleven county service area utilizes an effective infrastructure for providing sound programmatic and fiscal oversight and day-to-day operations, including data collection and clearly defined internal policies. We have divided the 11 counties into two primary service areas. The Program Director, Kelly O'Brien oversees the entire project. The Associate Director Monique Mendyke oversees the five rural counties of Mille Lacs, Kannabec, Chisago, Isanti and Pine. The six Metro counties are managed as East Metro and West Metro regions, with two Coordinators who oversee three counties each. We also have a Marketing and Recruitment Coordinator who manages comprehensive, multi-media marketing and outreach strategies. The Program also has the advantage of the services of a VISTA who works on developing infrastructure to provide ongoing support to veterans, military personnel and their families throughout the 11 county service territory.

Community Partnerships: VOA -- MN RSVP has built an effective volunteer program built on collaborative, mutually responsive community partnerships. RSVP Program staff serves on local Senior Commissions, the Central Minnesota Council on Aging, county Volunteer Coordinator Associations, the National Senior Corps Association Board, and other organizational networks. Our RSVP Director is facilitator of the "Invisible Force", a collaboration of the Lieutenant Governor's office, Twin Cities Public Television, the Minnesota Board on Aging, the Minnesota Association of Volunteer Administrators, the AARP, ServeMinnesota, the Vital Aging Network, Minnesota Senior Corps Association, United Way, Hands On and other community partners. The Invisible Force seeks to build "Minnesota's Future with 50+ Talent." This partnership, as well as our very close relationship with the Minnesota Board on Aging, elevates our ability to manage this program with excellence.

Management of Stations In 2011, staff conducted site visits and in-depth assessments with more than 220 community agencies. Our Advisory Council, along with other key community partners utilized the community assessment document provided by CNCS to evaluate and provide feedback to

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the program. The Council is developing annual goals, including an annual assessment of the project that will guide programming decisions, adaptations and improvements. The Council follows-up their assessment with ongoing support and input on the planning process, monitoring and reviewing as the process unfolds. Surveys are delivered annually to assess volunteers' satisfaction with RSVP, as well as their volunteer placement. Our staff makes follow-up calls two months post-enrollment with all volunteers to gather input on the success and ease of the placement process, as well as assess the success of and satisfaction with their volunteer role. Each of the strategies outlined above provides critical information to the RSVP strategic planning process. Throughout the process the VOA-MN lens, stakeholder input, and available research data is used to analyze funder priorities, local needs and trends in order to shape a responsive and responsible model of programming. These tools will continue to be utilized to provide input that will lead to continual program improvement.

In choosing partners to serve as RSVP stations, we used the local data and input cited above and moved to a new program model that operates from a philosophy of being a critical partner in the success of stations, rather than a value-added component. Baseline station criteria includes that stations: 1) have an established need for RSVP to support successful outcomes, 2) use evidence-based programming, 3) offer valuable and rewarding volunteer opportunities for people 55 and over, and 4) provide service in an RSVP focus area. As VOA - MN RSVP right-sized our program to better meet identified community needs in an efficient and outcome-focused model, stations and volunteers who fell outside of focus areas were graduated through a respectful and consistent process. We worked to educate stations and volunteers about new focus areas, and options were explored for shifting assignments. Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) are signed with each current station, outlining areas of responsibility and roles. MOUs include key core elements, as well as individualized sections outlining unique specifics of each partnership, such as data collection expectations and timelines. MOU's are signed on a three year basis, but are renewed annually, or when a staff or other

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significant change occurs.

As previously described, VOA -- MN's RSVP program has established the use of research-based programming as a baseline criteria for becoming a station, which generates concrete, measurable impact of volunteer and projects. We collect and analyze basic data (volunteer hours) on a monthly basis and statistical impact data annually. Staff review and improve infrastructure, including the Volunteer Reporter database, developing consistent, efficient and streamlined processes for collecting and analyzing relevant data. We develop and update tools as needed. Individualized MOU addendums clarify data collection expectations and timelines with stations. RSVP volunteers are actively engaged in achieving measurable outcomes on a daily basis. In each area served by RSVP volunteers within the Healthy Futures, Aging in Place focus, service recipients will be surveyed on the impact the service has on increasing their social ties/perceived social support. This on-going assessment of volunteer roles will assure that the service activities effectively lead to the desired National Performance Measure outcome, and are meeting the identified community need.

Developing Capacity to Serve Unmet Needs Outside of Primary Focus Area: VOA -- MN RSVP has built a partnership with the State of Minnesota's Military Outreach Director to serve veterans, military personnel, and their families. Through this partnership, our RSVP program is connecting with the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program in communities across the eleven-county service area to meet the unique needs of those who have served our county. Beyond the Yellow Ribbon is a comprehensive program that creates awareness for the purpose of connecting service members and their families with community support, training, services and resources. Yellow Ribbon synchronizes sustainable community support networks; connects and coordinates agencies and companies to provide resources and support to service members and their families; delivers formal training to service members and their families before, during and after deployment; and provides an opportunity for Minnesotans to support service members and their families. RSVP members will be serving as

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outreach advocates for the network, reaching out to educate veterans, military personnel and their families to connect them with services, resources and support systems. RSVP volunteers will also be working with neighborhood schools to support them in implementing the available tool kit to identify and support students who are struggling with the effects of having a parent deployed. In addition, the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon partnership will aid in directing services in each of the other focus areas to veterans, military personnel and their families, as well as create opportunities to support veterans in volunteering to support other veterans.

VOA -- MN's RSVP is also responding to Education, Economic Opportunity, Housing and Other. To address the significant educational achievement gap in Minnesota, VOA -- MN will partner with community agencies that provide after-school programs to youth living in high poverty areas. Partner programs will utilize research-based evidence-based best practices to support literacy learning and academic achievement. RSVP will recruit 70 volunteers to tutor children in reading and math. Our partner stations will provide training and supervision. Children will take pre- and post- tests to measure academic improvement. Our anticipated output is the number of children, who participate, with an outcome of students with improved academic performance in literacy and math, and improved school attendance.

To address poverty and unemployment in our region, VOA -- MN will recruit 25 volunteers to work with host partner agencies to provide direct services to economically disadvantaged job seekers. Volunteers will use proven methods of service delivery to clients, including helping draft effective resumes, providing mock interviews, assisting job seekers in accessing resources and locating potential jobs and supporting job training and placement services. 25 Volunteers will serve 350 hours through 10 sites, rendering direct service to 100 individuals. Our anticipated output is economically-disadvantaged individuals receiving job search, placement and skill development, with an outcome of individuals being placed in jobs.

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VOA -- MN will also add an additional area of volunteer activity that supports Community Safety. Earlier in 2012 there was a fatal shooting in a rural Minnesota courtroom. This tragic event illuminated the need for increased security in our county courtrooms. VOA -- MN will recruit 14 Volunteer Bailiffs who will support courtroom safety by assisting with administrative duties such as receiving and delivering paperwork and other tasks that might pull a Deputy from the courtroom and cause a delay in courtroom proceedings. Volunteers will be trained and supervised by County Deputies. We will recruit 14 volunteers to serve in shifts covering all scheduled court times. Volunteers will serve an average of nine hours per month each, for a total of 1,200 hours per year. Our anticipated outcome is a reduction in the amount of courtroom delays due to an armed Deputy being out of the courtroom to conduct administrative duties.

We will also deploy volunteers with Habitat for Humanity to address the need for low-income housing in our communities and also home improvements in an effort to halt home foreclosures. 70 RSVP volunteers will work with 7 stations, providing 5,500 hours of service to impact 235 individuals transitioned into safe, healthy housing.

In Event of Station Graduation: Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) are signed with each station, in each focus area and work plan, outlining areas of responsibility and roles. MOU's have core elements such as ensuring that stations are in compliance with RSVP program regulations and identifying prohibited activities. Individualized sections outline the unique attributes of each partnership, such as data collection expectations and timelines. MOU's are signed on a three year basis, but are renewed annually, or when a staff or other significant change occurs. Developing "station criteria" has allowed for an objective system for graduating stations that no longer fit in a focus area or appropriately meet the requirements for partnering with RSVP. Individual meetings are held with station staff and volunteers to explore options and determine next steps.

Plan and Infrastructure to assure National Performance Measure Outcomes and Outputs are

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Measured: Focusing on research-based programming assures our ability to measure and assess the success and impact of volunteer roles on the communities and clients their agencies serve.

Measurements and reporting requirements are established utilizing national performance measure outcomes and outputs, and are negotiated and agreed upon as MOU's are signed and are reviewed annually. We collect and analyze basic data (such as volunteer hours) on a monthly basis and statistical impact data annually. We continue to review and improve infrastructure, including the Volunteer Reporter database, and developing consistent, efficient, and streamlined processes for collecting and analyzing relevant data. Individualized MOU addendums clarify data collection expectations and timelines with stations. We maintain regular contact with stations to provide support and monitor volunteer placements and data collection.

Organizational Capability

Minnesota consistently ranks in the top three across the nation for volunteerism and offers a plethora of options for engagement. According to Steve McCurley, internationally recognized thought leader on volunteerism, "Minnesota has the best state network of volunteer program managers in the United States." The Greater Twin Cities metro area is first in the nation for volunteerism in a metropolitan area. Our corporate culture leads in engaging employees in volunteerism as a part of corporate identity, assuring that many retirees have long established volunteer connections prior to retirement. Even with a strong culture of volunteerism, our region also faces some challenges to volunteer recruitment -- there are never enough volunteers to meet the need, and finding the right "fit" can be a challenge. VOA -- MN's RSVP plays a vital role in connecting those who may not have engaged in volunteerism (despite our state's thriving culture of volunteerism) as we seek to expand civic engagement across the eleven-county service territory.

RSVP program staff is composed of highly trained and committed professionals with over 90 years of collective experience in working with older adults and volunteers. Kelly O'Brien, RSVP Program

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Director has over 25 years of experience in managing volunteer programs. Her experience spans small, grass-roots organizations, to large national non-profits. She has worked with thousands of volunteers of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. Kelly is well connected and active in the local volunteerism community and is seen as a valued leader and resource to the overall field. Ms. O'Brien was recently invited to participate in a planning session with the Minnesota Board on Aging where she was part of a team that secured RSVP as the first source of referral for a state-wide telephone resource and referral line. She also oversaw the convening of representatives of Corporate Retiree Volunteer groups and serves as facilitator for the "Invisible Force" working to connect existing resources, create innovative solutions and build a comprehensive, inter-connected infrastructure for engaging citizens over age of 55.

Kathy Mosavat, Division Director, Senior Services, has overall responsibility for the project, as part of the portfolio of services and programs under her direction. Kathy has a Masters in Management, and has been with VOA -- MN for over 30 years. During her tenure, Kathy has held leadership and supervision positions across the Senior Services Division. The vast majority of staff tenures range from 10 to 30+ years. This collective knowledge base is invaluable in identifying community resources and connections, and addressing needs and challenges.

VOA -- MN's Board of Directors appointed Paula Hart as President and CEO of the organization on June 1, 2011. Formerly, Ms. Hart served as President and CEO of Dakota Communities, a \$19 million disabilities services organization. Previously, she was Chief Operating Officer/Vice President of Business Development at Courage Center, a rehabilitation center for children and adults with disabilities. She received her B.A. in philosophy from Carleton College, and completed Stanford University's Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders.

As a comprehensive human services agency, VOA-MN provides essential and life-enhancing support and opportunity to Minnesotans across their lifespan. In the last fiscal year, VOA-MN served

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more than 24,000 people through 62 programs organized within our three impact areas: Children, Youth and Families; Housing, Seniors and People with Special Needs; and Reentry. Half of all served were age 65 or older. Fifty-two percent of all participants were Caucasian, 21 percent African American, 15 percent African, five percent Asian, four percent Hispanic, two percent American Indian, and one percent Bi-racial. The vast majority of all participants are low income.

VOA-MN not only owns but also manages a significant portfolio of affordable, supportive and assisted living options in the Twin Cities metro region and central Minnesota. We manage all public housing for the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (more than 5,000 units), several low-income buildings owned by VOA National and homes for families escaping homelessness, those with Special Needs and assisted living for seniors.

VOA-MN offers a continuum of in-home and community-based support for older adults to help restore, maintain, and promote their independence, physical health, and emotional well-being. Our Day Elders adult day programs in Minneapolis serve older adults who typically have limitations of mobility, stamina, and/or cognitive functioning, including a Hmong Elder program. We operate two Senior Centers, Southwest and Park Elder Center, and through our Senior Nutrition program serve hot, nutritious and culturally appropriate meals at 31 locations, nourishing more than 3,000 elders annually. We also operate the only African American Memory Care program in the state, a culturally competent approach to reaching out to African American caregivers. Our Elder Legal Services office provides a broad array of probate assistance and a Care Management and Protective Services program offers services to advocate for the rights of vulnerable older adults.

VOA-MN operates programs for people with intellectual challenges that seek to increase self-sufficiency and encourage an active, participatory quality of life. Our programs include: in-home support services and specialized residential services with supported living services, specialized residential services with supported living services for those with persistent mental illness, and

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supportive housing, such as the Our HOME program in central Minnesota, for chronically homeless families.

VOA -- MN is supported by approximately 1,700 volunteers annually contributing more than 12,000 hours of time and talent. VOA - MN operates one of the original pilot projects for Experience Corps, a k-3 tutoring program using older adults as tutors. Originally a pilot of Senior Corps, the program is now part of a national organization that recently merged with AARP, and receives funding as an AmeriCorps sub-grantee. The program has flourished, consistently excelling in performance-based evaluations conducted by funders and community partners. The majority of the tutors in the program receive either a partial/pro-rated Americorps stipend or a United Way funded stipend. Those tutors not receiving a stipend are RSVP members.

VOA MN has solid financial management systems in place. A separate series of revenue and expense accounts is in place to account for grant funds, in accordance with standard accounting procedures and in consultation with our auditors. VOA - MN is certified with the Charities Review Council of Minnesota and received the 2011 Partner of the Year Award from the Greater Twin Cities United Way.

Other

not applicable

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A