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Executive Summary

Harrison County Human Resource Agency's mission is to establish a base of services for the aging with a special focus on handicapped, economically and socially deprived. Two hundred and fifty (250) volunteers provide high quality services that meet critical needs in the community. Sixty one thousand five hundred and thirty-one dollars (\$61,531) is being requested to support this effort. The Retired Senior Volunteer Program addresses Healthy Futures with focus on homebound seniors and disabled individuals receiving food, transportation that allows them to live independently. The program interacts with other programs to develop a tracking system to record the number of individuals receiving companionship services in the community. Volunteers assist seniors with transportation to and from doctor's visits. Volunteers assist with building handicap ramps to enable disabled seniors to get in and out of their homes to maintain independent living. Volunteers assist with serving and help prepare meals at food banks and with food deliveries to individuals unable to leave their personal residence due to disability, injury or age. Anticipated outcomes include an increase in social ties and support to homebound or older adults and individuals within the Harrison County and an increase to senior' ability to remain in their homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible.

Strengthening Communities

The community being served is Harrison County, Mississippi. According to the 2011 census, Harrison County has a population of 191,040. The minorities are primarily Afro-American (22.1%) with burgeoning Hispanic population (3.9%) and Asian (3.0%). Median household income in 2009 was \$43,107, (\$35,624 in 1999). Median property tax for houses with mortgages was \$887 in 2009 and \$300 for houses with no mortgage. The most common industries are agriculture including forestry, oil and gas extraction; construction, and food/beverage outlets. There are eight (8) metropolitan areas: Biloxi, Gulfport, Long Beach, D'Iberville, Lyman, Saucier, Woolmarket and Pass Christian.

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Industry includes nine (9) casinos, five (5) military facilities including the Armed Forces Retirement Home, shopping malls, four (4) civilian hospitals, Veterans Hospital, Import/Export docks, International Airport, The Mississippi Gulf Coast Coliseum, museums, and more.

Our community partners are selected based on the needs of the community. To enhance awareness and bring together people of diverse backgrounds, the RSVP staff members and volunteers speak public events and to civic, school and senior organizations. RSVP networks with other community organizations to collaborate and share information in the form of forums, displays, brochures, and activities. The media, websites and flyers promote these events. Through these efforts, community resources are mobilized and other seniors are encouraged to attend and discover available services.

The clients served include: homeless, disabled, at-risk children, veterans, seniors, homebound community, and poverty level families. Non-profit agencies such as: United Way of South Mississippi, The Nourishing Place, Lynn Meadows Discovery Center, public schools and other request services from RSVP.

RSVP accesses the resources of state and local agencies to determine specific needs of homebound, disabled, underprivileged, hungry or homeless citizens. Our volunteers attend training and hands-on sessions with the Red Cross to prepare for disasters, blood drives, and emergency shelter services. Some RSVP volunteers still help with home repairs due to hurricane Katrina and Isaac. Volunteers serve at food distribution centers like Feed My Sheep. Others assist in assembling and delivering furniture, Christmas gifts and basic need items such as diapers and clothing to abused and neglected children currently in state custody. Volunteers also visit youth shelters to offer physical, emotional and moral support.

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RSVP volunteers mentor children struggling in school in programs such as Boost, a one-on-one reading project, or mentor parents of at-risk youth to teach effective parenting skills, and support inmates through the life improving skills sessions at the Harrison County Detention Center.

RSVP is involved in helping homes become sustainable and energy efficient by doing home repairs, performing electrical, plumbing services, building handicap ramps, installing grab bars for disabled individuals. Volunteers also partner with the Harrison County Sheriff's department's Senior and Law Enforcement Program. They install reflector address signs and blinking outside light bulbs to enable first responders to quickly locate victims. Volunteers deliver and assist seniors in filling out a "File of Life" which lists all medications, health issues, and other personal information needed in the event of an emergency. We work in conjunction with Harrison County Human Resource Agency, Advisory Boards, Senior Companion Program to ensure we meet national goals and objectives.

Recruitment and Development

To assure a high quality experience, seniors complete an enrollment form that includes a volunteer interest form highlighting their various skills and life experiences. RSVP staff explains policies and procedures to the volunteers and have them sign and date ensuring they understand and agree. The policies and procedures include process of enrollment, volunteer station information, volunteer insurance, newsletters, recognitions, assignments, grievances procedures and recording volunteer hours. This information ensures a good match between volunteer and the stations they serve. A criminal/sex offender background check is completed on all volunteers.

RSVP offers opportunities for development by assigning volunteers to stations such as: The Department of Human Services, Good News Jail and Prison, American Cancer Society, Veterans

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Administration Hospital, Bethel Free Clinic, nursing homes, local hospitals, local schools, churches, and law enforcement agencies just to name a few. These community based service organizations allow the volunteers to provide a meaningful service to the community while enriching the quality of their own lives and developing leadership potential.

RSVP has found the most effective recruitment tool is word of mouth. Volunteers share with their friends and neighbors the benefits of helping others less fortunate than they are. They encourage other seniors to sign up and share their time and life experiences. The senior volunteers become public speakers for their organizations. They provide information about the organization they service, along with giving much needed assistance (office work, patient care and attention, companionship, life skills) to that particular organization.

All stations provide training and recognition for volunteers assigned. An Annual Recognition is held by RSVP to honor volunteers that have reached a milestone with the RSVP program. They are awarded for the service they provide. Volunteers are nominated for awards such as: The President's Volunteer Service Award, The Mississippi Governor's Initiative for Excellence Award, The Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service Award, and local awards such as The John Caranna Award.

Volunteers receive verbal recognition on a regular basis in addition to referrals from other agencies. Also, local businesses offer discounts and other incentives for senior volunteers.

The retention for RSVP volunteers depends on the volunteer, volunteer stations, and/or the service activities. There are seniors that volunteer on a quarterly basis or during special events such as science fairs and school testing, and there are seniors that volunteer on a regular basis at the hospitals, senior centers and churches. Incentives are also given to senior volunteers by way of special gifts, awards, and recognitions to promote and encourage retention of volunteers.

Advisory Board members do presentations to other groups about the program and recruit volunteers. Presentations are done at senior centers, churches, and local senior clubs. Volunteers obtain value

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from their volunteer experience by gaining knowledge, learning new skills and making new friends and by making a vital contribution to their community.

Program Management

RSVP manages volunteers, stations and assignments through Volunteer Reporter Computer Software program. This software records individual volunteer information and station data. The information allows RSVP to keep track of all volunteers and address specific community needs. RSVP ensures that the volunteer assignments are consistent with the focus areas for the project, as well as, the interests and abilities of the volunteers. The stations provide orientation, in-service instruction, individual support, supervision, and recognition for volunteer service. The local community businesses support volunteers by offering RSVP members various discounts.

Organizations and agencies that are requesting volunteers fill out a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which will guide the working relationship between both parties and is updated every three (3) years. The MOU provides the following: responsibility of the program, the responsibility of the stations, a station accessibility checklist, and a station safety checklist. A station evaluation is completed on a yearly basis describing the program impact. This evaluation determines the benefit of RSVP and ensures that all needs are addressed.

To assure that all goals and objectives are met, RSVP sends out station observation surveys. All volunteer stations are encouraged to fill out a survey which allows the station supervisors to provide input about the program and the volunteers they manage. The survey asks the station supervisors to give information on the quality of service of the volunteers, as well as, the impact that the volunteers are making in the community. Station supervisors are asked to work together with RSVP staff to solve any problems that may arise between the volunteer and station assignment.

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RSVP staff, Advisory Board, and outreach volunteers visit the stations to assure that RSVP members are content with their volunteer assignments. Volunteers are encouraged to submit annual assessments by filling out a Volunteer Satisfaction Survey. Feedback provides RSVP information on how to improve the program, thus providing meaningful placement for the volunteers. Volunteers are encouraged to provide services that meet the needs of ever changing population and program goals. The life experiences they share are invaluable. Developing and cultivating the leadership capacity of RSVP volunteers is one of the best ways to ensure a high quality volunteer experience.

To ensure accountability and efficient use of available resources, RSVP bookkeeper manages project resources and in-kind contributions in Microsoft Excel and QuickBooks Spreadsheets. The spreadsheets are reconciled each month for accuracy. RSVP receives in-kind contributions from various sources such as: Harrison County Board of Supervisors, RSVP office and storage space, located at 842 Commence Street, and local community centers where recognition events are held. These in-kind contributions are listed as a line item in the grant. All in-kind contributors fill out an in-kind contribution form listing the name of the business or individual, address, city, state, zip code, description of goods and services, real or estimated value of contribution, signature of contributor and date contributed.

Harrison County Board of Supervisors through, the sponsor, Harrison County Human Resources Agency (HCHRA) assumes responsibility and support for nonfederal match. The sponsor works with the RSVP program as dual leaders in mobilizing resources for the project. Community participation is generated by individuals, groups and organizations such as volunteer stations, civic and service clubs, the media and friends and family of volunteers and more. The impacts of the project and the volunteers are a valuable asset to this community. RSVP located at 842 Commerce Street, Gulfport, MS 39507, (228) 896-0412, the same site as the program sponsor.

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Organizational Capability

Harrison County Human Resource Agency has sponsored the RSVP Program for 20 years and for 38 years has successfully operated multifaceted programs that address community needs. Project Director has 35 years of community relations experience. She has volunteered in schools, church, and sports activities. Is licensed with the FCC as a HAM radio operator, completed the US Department of Homeland Security National Incident systems IS-100, 200, 300, 400, and 700, Certified Nursing Assistant, and is a Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT) trainer. The director is responsible for management of day to day internal policy such as: assigning volunteers to special projects, writing small project grants, and talking to community leaders that may have ideas about improving the program. The director oversees the program, collaborates with station supervisors on a monthly basis and is responsible for evaluations of other project staff members. The director interacts with volunteers on a daily basis.

Secretary/Bookkeeper graduated cum laude with a Bachelor's Degree in Social Science, several years of experience in Accounting and Auditing, completed the US Department of Homeland Security Incident Systems IS-100, 200, 300, 400, and 700 and is a member of Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society. The secretary accounts for all county and federal budgeted expenditures and cash disbursements in the program. The secretary/bookkeeper assists the project director in managing the day to day internal policy and interacts with volunteers on a daily basis.

The Project Director and Secretary/Bookkeeper are trained to manage the data program. Data information is computer generated (Microsoft Excel and Quick Books) and in hard copy binders to ensure accountability, and effective maintenance. Sensitive information is secured electronically; it is shared only on a "need to know" basis. Harrison County bookkeeping department works closely with

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RSVP to help ensure accountability.

A Financial Status Report (FSR) reports on expenses on a cumulative basis of the grant and is due on a semi-annual basis in e-Grants. The 272 or Federal Cash Transaction Report is done through Payment Management System quarterly to report on Federal funds used. A Project Progress Report (PPR) is done through e-Grants semi-annually. A Project Profile and Volunteer Activity report (PPVA) is done through e-Grants every two (2) years.

Project goods are purchased through the Harrison County Purchasing Department. All departments must submit information on a signed "Purchase Requisition" saved as a word document in Microsoft Word. The following information is necessary: vender, item description, cost, quantity, budget code, and authorized signature from project sponsor and Executive Director approving purchase request.

Harrison County has a standardized method of employment that applies to each phase of employment. Everyone must fill out an application. Professional staff must have a resume'. The Personnel Department offers a list of applicants to the Department Heads for their hiring, based on qualifications, experience and education.

The Travel Policy of Harrison County states that travel to a special assignment in another city, the time spent traveling in excess of normal commuting time is counted as time worked. Local travel must be approved by project sponsor. All out of town travel requests must be approved by Harrison County Board of Supervisors prior to the date of travel.

Human Resource Executive Director meets weekly with RSVP Director to assess, evaluate, and offer suggestions for program improvement. The program is assessed and evaluated by Advisory Council Members. The Advisory Council, which consists of a minimum of five (5) members, gives advice and

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guidance regarding overall program management, assists with planning and implementation of the Annual Recognition Event and recruits volunteers to meet program requirements.

Other

After the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, organizations along the coast that were involved in recovery efforts realized the importance of collaboration in order to better meet the needs in the community. Harrison County Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) will network with over 100 community partners to meet critical needs in our area and address the focus areas outlined in the Corporation for National and Community Service strategic plan. Agencies such as the Disability Connection, Area Agency on Aging, Law Enforcement Agencies, the Veterans Administration Hospital, Habitat for Humanity, Catholic Charities, and Gulf Coast Community Action Agency will request assistance from RSVP volunteers to address the needs of individuals. The needs might consist of making homes more energy efficient to lower utility bills for low income citizens, small home repairs, installing fire alarms, and transportation to doctor appointments. The needs are unlimited.

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

Not Applicable