

Page is Blank

Narratives

Executive Summary

The City of Jacksonville is the sponsor of RSVP Duval. The City of Jacksonville/Special Services Department/Senior Services Division has sponsored RSVP of Duval County since 1985. The City's mission is serving you, meeting today's challenges, focusing on the future; it's vision is to make Jacksonville's local government the most responsive and effective city government in America and Jacksonville the best place in the nation to live, work and raise a family. RSVP volunteers know they are a vital part of improving the quality of life in our city. RSVP Duval develops a variety of volunteer opportunities for community service for people aged 55 and better who are willing to share their experiences, abilities and skills for themselves, the community and others. Our dual purpose is to engage senior citizens in volunteer services which meet critical community needs and to provide a high quality volunteer experience that will enrich their lives. The service categories we address are: Disaster Service (American Red Cross), Education (The Duval County School Board and 57 Elementary Schools), Environmental Stewardship (St. Johns Riverkeeper, Catty Shack Wildlife Sanctuary), Economic Opportunity (United Way Tax Wise), Healthy Futures (10 retirement communities, 15 Senior Centers, American Cancer Society, Brooks Rehabilitation, Ronald McDonald House, Hospice, St. Vincent dePaul, Salvation Army, Sulzbacher Center for the Homeless, etc.), Veterans and Military Families (Clara White Mission, Hospice, City of Jacksonville Military and Veteran Affairs, Finegan Elementary). An estimated 650 RSVP volunteers are serving, mainly serving children, frail seniors and veterans/military families at 132 different volunteer work stations. The primary focus area of this project is Education. At the end of the three-year grant we will have: a positive impact on healthy futures-seniors will live healthier, happier and longer lives; an increase in reading scores; provided a positive impact in the lives of military and veteran families in our community. We are requesting a CNCS federal investment of \$ 69,049.00, which will be matched and exceeded with a \$133,000.00 contribution from the City of Jacksonville.

Narratives

The researched-based methods our project uses to address community needs are Senior Center Logs, evaluations, surveys, volunteer time sheets and community needs surveys.

Our anticipated outcomes are: 1) Improve children's literacy and oral language skills, build meaningful relationships by providing the individual attention many kids need to thrive. Because reading is the single most important skill for learning and the building block for a lifetime of academic success, RSVP Duval volunteers help students become strong readers. Reading aloud to children can help them develop into strong readers. Being a strong reader also improves students' on-time grade promotion and increases high school graduation rates. Volunteers will upgrade their own existing skills and learn new skills, exhibit a high level of commitment to the community, reduce social isolation and improve their health and quality of life. The contributions made will benefit the broad local community, reflect the diversity of the population, advance community building efforts and embody key principles to enhance the quality of life. 2) Many seniors will fall into despair as they age, loose mobility and go off to a curative path in the final stages of life. Through the efforts of RSVP volunteers we will work to give them individual new hopes that take limitless forms because of individual aspirations and goals that are as unique as we are. 3) Increase veteran and military family volunteers by 50% and increase our participation in programs that serve veteran and military families by 50%.

Education is RSVP's focus because the state of education in Jacksonville requires improvement. The high school graduation rate had a slight increase for the fifth year in a row, but is still below state average. For the fourth year in a row ECHOS, a measure of kindergarten readiness, has shown some improvement, and there is still a need for more support to bring them up. The number of higher education degrees increased for the tenth year in a row. The percentage of 10th graders with adequate reading comprehension remains disturbingly low.

Strengthening Communities

Narratives

RSVP Duval serves the city of Jacksonville, Florida, which encompasses all of Duval County. We are a consolidated government. Employers with 5,000 or more employees in Duval County are: The Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Duval County Public Schools, Naval Station Mayport, City of Jacksonville, Baptist Health, Bank of America Merrill Lynch and Florida Blue. According to the 2011 census, median income is \$49,463 and 14.2% of the population is living below the federal poverty guideline. The city of Jacksonville ranks as the 14th largest city in the United States in population with 864,263 residents. Besides the eastern oceanfront, the major geographic feature of the area is the St. John's River and its tributaries, which meander through the region. Jacksonville, the largest city in area in the continental United States, covers 841 square miles and is an urban community. The racial make-up of the city is: Caucasian-62.8%, African American-29.8%, American Indian and Alaska Native-0.4%, Asian-4.3%, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander-0.1%. 30.2 % of the population is under 18 years old and 11.4% is 65 or older. 87.2% of the population older than 25 have earned a high school diploma or higher, 24.9% of the population older than 24 have earned a bachelor's degree or higher. An eight member Advisory Council made up of representatives from local social services agencies, health care and the private sector meet nine months of each year (there are no meetings in June, July or August). Their purpose is to provide direction to the Project Director, lead fundraising efforts, identify opportunities in the community for partnerships, review annual assessments to evaluate program accomplishments and assist in developing annual program goals. Our main community partners are: The Ted Summerlee Family (annual financial contribution, the Awards given at our Volunteer Recognition event are named in honor of Mrs. Summerlee), Universal Health Care (includes a member of the Advisory Council, makes financial contributions by contributing to volunteer recognition events), Brooksdale (makes financial contributions), Unitarian Universalist Church (made a financial contribution, allowed a presentation of the RSVP program). Methods used to notify the public of our program include: local media, newspaper articles,

Narratives

newsletters, websites, brochures, giving presentations, participating in health fairs and publications. We have no barriers to public support. The resources we use from community partners include the provision of training, recognition and health events. Service programs our volunteers are currently participating in that did not include seniors are: 1) receptionist working at City Hall's information desk, and 2) teaching job readiness skills such as resume writing to veterans at The Clara White Mission.

Feedback given by volunteer stations is used to continue, expand, restructure, and make improvements as needed. We have added and discontinued works based on this very important feedback.

RSVP partnered with the Foster Grandparent Program to organize and a fashion show during The Mayor's Older Americans Week; Linking Solutions for a training entitled "Saving Money, Having Fun and Using Technology"; the City of Jacksonville for the Mayor's BEST, Senior Games, the Mayor's FishaThon, the Senior Prom, roundtable discussions; The Mary Singleton Center Advisory Council's Volunteer Appreciation Day and many other events; St. Pius IV for the Martin Luther King Day of Service; Second Harvest Food Bank for 911 Day of Remembrance, etc.

One community activity our volunteers participate in is the annual Jazz Festival, a seven day event that is vital to our community, its ability to thrive, and to be seen as an ideal destination for visitors. This event produces an impact of more than \$200 million annually to our local economy.

RSVP volunteers served their community in excess of 35,000 hours in 2011.

Recruitment and Development

.The Boomer Task Force, created and maintained by RSVP Duval, developed position descriptions and recruited volunteers to fill positions; they continue to develop leadership skills and build new skills.

Studies show that people who volunteer are less likely to become ill, maintain a more positive outlook on life and live longer.

Narratives

A high quality experience for volunteers will be assured through personal contact and the use of surveys and evaluations. 18 volunteers are able to learn new computer and communication skills while working as receptionists at City Hall. Volunteers are able to develop leadership potential as CARE leaders, TaleTeller captains, and while working in leadership roles at the 19 different senior centers (officers of the Advisory Councils, Site Councils and governing boards).

Recruiting is extended to all races, genders, eligible age groups, sexual orientations, religions, etc. We have increased work with veterans and military families by making presentations at Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Vets, VFW posts and American Legion posts to recruit and develop work stations. Volunteers, Partner Agency staff, RSVP Advisory Council and community groups will receive information about RSVP and volunteering on a frequent basis. Volunteers will feel more connected to RSVP and become more aware of opportunities that are available to them because of increased communication, including at least two agency visits each year. An increased number of volunteers have email, making communication more convenient. This will also make Partner Agencies more aware of our successes, the abilities of the volunteers and the services that can be provided through RSVP.

All RSVP volunteers must submit an application and an assessment that makes us aware of their skills, abilities, interests and experience which helps us make successful placements. All volunteers participate in orientation with the volunteer coordinator or program manager. After successful completion of orientation a work assignment is given. Beginning in 2013, all volunteers will participate in two in-service trainings annually. Work station assessments make us aware of skill enhancement.

RSVP Tale Tellers will continue to receive orientation before they are assigned to read in a Duval school and will participate in as many as 3 in-service sessions during each school year. These training sessions are rated very highly for the information presented by qualified and diverse trainers and the

Narratives

camaraderie that is encouraged among the group. School representatives are often included in the training sessions. This exceptional training plays a major role in the recruiting, retention and recognition of the Tale Tellers. The communication with school representatives has contributed to the sustainability and achievements of this program, named a best practice by the state office.

Staff and The Advisory Council will continue to visit Partner Agencies on a regular schedule. We complete "Partner Agency Visit" and "Observations" reports to document how the volunteers help the agency fulfill their mission, how agencies rate the impact of the volunteer's work on their organization and whether or not the agency assists volunteers learn new skills, gain knowledge and have opportunities for personal growth. The reports are reviewed by staff for appropriate follow-up and action.

RSVP will continue its successful volunteer recruitment and development strategies by: presenting RSVP information to retirement and pre-retirement groups; appearing on radio and TV shows; submitting articles to newspapers and newsletters; recruiting and advertising various volunteer opportunities through volunteer websites, including Volunteer Match, City of Jacksonville, other web sites and e-mail; staying informed about volunteer trends and using the information to improve methods of recruiting and developing volunteer opportunities; recognizing volunteers through annual and small group recognition events; participating in recognition events held by stations; giving special recognition of RSVP volunteers during National Volunteer Week; sending birthday cards; and by submitting nominations for volunteer awards

Program Management

Volunteer stations are selected based on community need, the opportunities for meaningful volunteer placements, and a reasonable expectation that the program can recruit volunteers to fill the assignment. Before an agency is asked to become partner agency, the volunteer coordinator or program manager makes a visit to discuss the program and the roles and responsibilities of both RSVP

Narratives

and the work station. A partnership agreement (memorandum of understanding) is signed, and a RSVP handbook and time sheets are given and explained.

Work stations are visited two times each year to ensure that the station fits into our work plan, and that the assignment is productive, and to maintain open communication with the station director and that the assignment is productive. An annual assessment of each work station is completed by the Advisory Council, volunteer coordinator or program manager.

Accountability, as well as efficient and effective use of available resources, is ensured through a team approach consisting of the Program Manager, Senior Centers Manager, Acting Division Chief, Division Accountant and City of Jacksonville Budget Analyst. Before purchase requests are input into the computer system by clerical support they are approved by the program manager, then final approval by the Division's Accountant (after verifying a legitimate purchase). The Division Accountant manages the budget for this project.

The RSVP Advisory Council and RSVP volunteers continue to seek and secure resources to sustain and expand the project. This includes sponsorship for volunteer recognition events as well as cash and in-kind contributions from Partner Agencies and community supporters.

High quality project management will continue through the following strategies: 1) Volunteer assignments will be stringently evaluated to determine whether or not they address specific community needs and provide meaningful volunteer placements. 2) Volunteer surveys will continue to be used to evaluate performance and satisfaction and make needed improvements. RSVP delivers information to stations about RSVP programs, volunteerism, aging and other pertinent issues. 3) After each station visit the RSVP representative will complete a form that includes information based on personal observation and contact with the volunteer and station director.

Stations and staff work together to develop volunteer work assignments and to ensure the assignments are engaging and impactful.

Narratives

The RSVP Advisory Council's recruitment, orientation and training practices have been enhanced to attract additional members with a higher level of leadership skills. Public awareness of the program has been increased by publicizing accomplishments using various venues including media, publication of articles in group newsletters, submitting nominations for volunteer awards, etc.

An annual program assessment is conducted by the Advisory Council to assess project performance and to ensure goals and objectives are met. Information and data gathered by using specific surveys and performance measurement instruments are used to demonstrate program impacts. Staff performance evaluations, which include job specific competencies and performance objectives, are required on a semi-annual and annual basis. RSVP staff survey Station Directors and volunteers as part of our annual assessment of stations and work assignments; these assessment results are tallied and first published at our annual Volunteer recognition event. The information gathered is used all year to continually assess and improve the program.

Volunteer hours and impact based work plans, collected monthly, and are tracked in an Access data base.

Resources continue to be sought and secured by: submitting grant proposals to expand the program; seeking corporate/business contributions and in-kind donations, and the Advisory Council's fundraising efforts. One community supporter has advised of their plans to increase their contribution to the program because of its significant contribution to the community.

Organizational Capability

RSVP of Duval County has been sponsored by the City of Jacksonville, Neighborhoods Department/Senior Services Division since 1985. Because of the City's successful management of federal grants, a federal grant has been award to RSVP each year since 1985.

The City has been very successful in managing volunteer programs, its involvement with seniors and impact based programming as is evidenced in The Senior Services Division. The Senior Services

Narratives

Division also sponsors:

- * The Jacksonville Foster Grandparent Program which provides hourly stipends to seniors age 60 years and older who are qualified to work with special needs children in a wide range of assignments.
- * Independent Living Program which provides temporary in-home and group respite services for primary caregivers of homebound frail elderly, Senior Companions, and Caring Volunteers who assist homebound citizens age 60 and older with low and moderate income.
- * Senior Activities Services that operates the Jacksonville Senior Service Program at 19 senior center/nutrition sites that include health and wellness, educational programs, craft classes, field trips, special events, etc.
- * Transportation
- * Homemaker Services which provides light housekeeping services to seniors age 60 years of age and older who live alone or with an elderly spouse and have a qualifying medical condition
- * Special Events for Seniors which provides events that are intellectually, physically and socially relevant to seniors age 55 and older.

Each of these programs receives funding through federal and/or state grants.

RSVP is governed by the City of Jacksonville's personnel, financial management, accounting, purchasing, training, travel and other relevant policies and procedures. Office space and telephones are also provided by the City.

The city of Jacksonville assures that RSVP has adequate facilities, equipment, supplies, purchasing procedures and personnel management support, including clearly defined roles for staff and administrators, internal policies, including travel policy. These policies are readily available for review upon request.

RSVP program and volunteer data is contained in an Access data management system, which can

Narratives

readily be accessed for reports and information.

Staff performance evaluations, which include job specific competencies and performance objectives, are required on a semi-annual and annual basis and are based on project goals and objectives.

The principal staff accountable for the project will be:

Program Manager: R. Yvette Jefferson, B.A., Sociology. MBA, 22 of 30 years in management with the City of Jacksonville. Active community volunteer. Works on the renewal application.

Community Activities Coordinator: Janet Duvall, CVA, B.S. Over 14 years working with and managing volunteers. Active community volunteer.

TaleTeller Coordinator: This position will be filled by December 1, 2012.

Clerical Support Aide: Dianne Barnes, 6 years as Clerical Support Aide with the City of Jacksonville.

Other contributors to this project are:

Acting Division Chief: Sharon Laird, B.A., History and Education. Master's Degree in Education and Religion. Experience includes: Director and Dean at an Institution of Higher Learning, more than 25 years in management and working with senior citizens. Active community volunteer.

Senior Center Manager: Mary Blake-Holley, B. S. Sociology, more than 20 years management experience with the City of Jacksonville. Active community volunteer.

Division Accountant: James Lee, B. S. Accounting, 14 years experience. Active community volunteer.

Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A