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Executive Summary

The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures. An estimated 350 RSVP volunteers will serve in the primary focus area through a network of 17 volunteer stations in Barton and Pawnee Counties. At the end of the 12 month performance period, they will assist seniors and persons with disabilities to age in place through home delivery of groceries and meals (140 unduplicated recipients), transportation to necessary medical appointments (145 unduplicated passengers) and to local enrichment activities (140 unduplicated passengers), and friendly visiting to provide companionship (25 unduplicated clients). They will assist residents of Barton and Pawnee Counties with emergency food through local food banks (6000 unduplicated recipients) and will provide long term hunger relief through the development and maintenance of community gardens (100 unduplicated recipients).

The CNCS federal investment of \$48,722 will be supplemented by \$26,617 from non-federal resources.

Strengthening Communities

Barton County is a rural Kansas county with a population of 27,674 in 2010 per the US Census Bureau. The largest town in the county is Great Bend with a population of 15,500; two communities have less than 3,000 and three farming communities have less than 700. 16.9% of Barton County's population is over 65. Pawnee County, located west and south of Barton County, had a population of 6973 in 2010 according to the US Census Bureau. Most of the population is centered in Larned, the county seat, with 4054 residents. 17.4% of Pawnee County residents are over 65. The residents of both counties are primarily Caucasian, Barton with 95.4% and Pawnee with 91.6%. In Barton County, 1.9% of the population is African American and 13.9% is Hispanic. In Pawnee County, 4.9% of the population is African American and 6.6% is Hispanic.

The population of small rural counties is declining according to the Kansas Department on Aging and Disability Services (DADS) as more young people and families move to urban areas for better work opportunities. At the same time, many older people choose to move back to rural areas at retirement

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because of a cheaper standard of living. So while the overall population may be declining, the number of older residents will remain the same and/or increase which will put a strain on the community resources in place to serve this population. Normally in rural areas, families and extended families are available to assist an older person as needs increase. However, the inevitable result of young people and families moving to urban areas for better work opportunities is more and more seniors living in rural areas without local family support. Improved medical care has also extended the natural lives of many Americans today. Longer lives without local family support can translate into isolation without community programs to assist with independent living.

RSVP volunteers are in a unique position to address the needs of this population. RSVP has developed several in-house programs specifically to assist, including the Medical Transportation program which provides transportation to necessary medical appointments both local and long-distance. The Talk Listen Care program is in the process of being developed; this program will match homebound seniors and persons with disabilities with RSVP volunteers who will visit at least once a week to provide companionship. Any unmet needs will be reported to RSVP director for appropriate referral. The RSVP Grocery program provides grocery shopping services once a week for homebound seniors and persons with disabilities. RSVP volunteers also serve at other stations, such as Meals on Wheels and local public transportation services provided through the Commissions on Aging in Ellinwood, Hoisington and Larned. RSVP is always working with local providers of senior services to identify unmet needs and develop programs or resources to meet those needs.

14% of the population of Barton County and 14.4% of Pawnee County lives with income below the US poverty level according to the US Census Bureau. Research found at www.feedingamerica.org shows that 13.4% of Barton County residents and 12.2% of Pawnee County residents live in "food insecurity", which is defined as not knowing when or where you will find your next meal. Of that group, 44% are living below 130% of the federal poverty level; actual numbers based on 2009 US

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Census Bureau data are 3720 people in Barton county and 780 people in Pawnee County are living on less than \$14079 for one person or \$28,685 for a family of four. For individuals or families living with limited and/or fixed incomes, unexpected events or expenditures can devastate the most careful budget causing an emergency food crisis. Local community food banks in Barton and Pawnee Counties are staffed almost entirely with RSVP volunteers, who solicit and collect donations, stock the food pantries and pack boxes and bags for food distribution.

While receiving food from community food banks can assist in emergency situations, a long term solution is more advantageous for individuals and families living below the poverty level. Learning to grow your own food through participation in community gardens can provide such a solution; produce can even be sold to offset food purchases from a grocery store. Through a community garden, a community can effectively change the very way its members eat, recognize nutritional needs and perhaps even the way community members look at eating and the connection between health and food consumption. RSVP volunteers will provide assistance and education through the development and maintenance of community gardens. There are currently two community gardens in Barton County and RSVP volunteers will work to develop a community garden in Larned and other communities as interest dictates.

RSVP volunteers will assist seniors and persons with disabilities in Barton and Pawnee Counties to live independently and age in place. RSVP volunteers will also assist economically disadvantaged residents of Barton and Pawnee Counties with emergency food support and with education and assistance to improve food security on a long term basis.

Recruitment and Development

The Volunteer Coordinator or Director meets with each new volunteer to learn the volunteer's particular skills and interests so the new volunteer can be placed with an appropriate station; each volunteer is encouraged to report any concerns or problems to RSVP if unhappy with station

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placement. Volunteer satisfaction is also measured through annual surveys.

RSVP of Central Kansas works closely with other non-profits and governmental agencies in Barton and Pawnee Counties to identify unmet needs and to develop resources and programs to address those needs utilizing volunteers. RSVP also works closely with station managers to identify ways that volunteers can be used to enhance existing services and programming and to make sure that volunteers receive proper training to be able to make a meaningful contribution. Volunteers are encouraged to take leadership roles within in-house RSVP programs and are used to coordinate programs such as the Everyone Able to Read by Sharing (EARS) program and the Talk Listen Care (TLC) program. RSVP trains volunteers to counsel Medicare Beneficiaries on Medicare Part D options and to assist with enrollment.

The residents of both counties are primarily Caucasian, Barton with 95.4% and Pawnee with 91.6%. In Barton County, 1.9% of the population is African American and 13.9% is Hispanic. In Pawnee County, 4.9% of the population is African American and 6.6% is Hispanic. RSVP works to identify churches and community groups with diverse ethnicities to target for recruitment through presentations. The Hispanic population of Barton and Pawnee Counties are not adequately represented in the current RSVP membership but the director plans to work with a prominent community member who has close personal ties to that population to identify methods to rectify that. Part of the problem in Barton and Pawnee Counties is that many of the older Hispanic population do not speak English and live within a separate Hispanic community for the most part. The aging Hispanic Baby Boomers will most probably be a better target for recruitment. RSVP has volunteers living within all economic levels, from SSI recipients to independently wealthy professionals. Barton and Pawnee Counties have a large population of veterans. RSVP currently works with the American Legion in Barton which is the most active of the veterans service organizations in both counties; a core group of approximately 30 volunteers from the American Legion are very active in several RSVP

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stations. RSVP plans to establish relationships with the other veteran service organizations in Barton and Pawnee County as well. There are also volunteer opportunities for persons with disabilities at RSVP; for example, Busy Hands/Busy Hearts is a group of volunteers that make knitted or crocheted newborn baby caps, hats for veterans, and lap robes for residents of nursing homes including veterans. There are several homebound volunteers or volunteers living in assisted living facilities that work in this program.

RSVP maintains close contact to the volunteers through six newsletters each year, full of photos of volunteers in action, spotlights on stations, recognition of outstanding volunteer efforts. The director also has a monthly column in the largest regional newspaper in both counties and a monthly column in the Great Bend Senior Newsletter published by the Recreation Center. Volunteers receive birthday cards annually, with personal notes from RSVP staff. A recognition banquet is held annually to thank the volunteers for their service. For the 2012 banquet, over 100 door prizes were donated by the local merchants and community members in an overwhelming show of recognition and gratitude for the work done by RSVP volunteers. Special awards for Volunteer of the Year and Station of the Year are announced at the banquet each year. A holiday open house is also held every year in November around Thanksgiving with more door prizes as a small "thank you" gift for all the work done by RSVP volunteers. The RSVP director works with local media outlets as well as social media to publicly recognize volunteers for outstanding efforts. RSVP also provides supplemental accident and liability insurance for all volunteers.

Program Management

RSVP staff includes a Project Director and a Volunteer Coordinator. Both staff members work with station managers to ensure compliance with RSVP program regulations and applicable laws. If a problem is identified, it is addressed immediately by the Director with the station manager or the director of the program or agency. RSVP works closely with community non-profits and

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governmental agencies to identify needs in other areas besides the Healthy Futures focus area. The director participates in community networking groups that bring together agencies and programs that serve all our communities, including agencies that serve children; agencies that work on environmental issues or civic issues; agencies that work on disaster preparedness or health issues, etc. The Central Kansas Volunteers in Action (CKVIA) is a volunteer center with two components. The RSVP program recruits and manages volunteers 55 and older; the Central Kansas Volunteer Connection (CKVC) recruits and manages volunteers under 55. The RSVP program currently has several stations that do not fit into any of the CNCS focus areas and these stations will be moved into the CKVC. Volunteers currently working at those stations will be contacted to see if they want to move to a station within one of the focus areas but if not, they will also be moved into the CKVC. There will be no noticeable change for the volunteers as recognitions and supplemental insurance for those volunteers will be provided through the CKVC. RSVP will contact volunteers that have no volunteer hours reported in a six month period to verify they still are active volunteers or need to be graduated.

RSVP staff will work with each station manager to develop the tracking documents necessary to capture the outputs and outcomes required. The Volunteer Coordinator assisted by an office volunteer appointed to be in charge of collecting the tracking data will contact each station monthly to retrieve the tracking documents. The outcome surveys will be sent out twice a year and one telephone survey will be done each year by office volunteers. These documents will be maintained in files in the Director's office for safe-keeping.

Barton Community College (BCC), sponsor of the CKVIA and RSVP, employs a director of grants. The RSVP director works closely with the grant director to make certain that project resources are utilized appropriately. Income and expenses for RSVP are tracked through the accounting systems of Barton Community College and records are maintained both at the RSVP office and at BCC. An

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explanation of each entry, income or expense, is required by BCC. The RSVP program is included in the BCC audit.

Organizational Capability

RSVP has been in operation in this area for more than 30 years. 80% of the Director's time is spent on RSVP; 20% of the Director's time is spent on developing and maintaining the Central Kansas Volunteer Connection (CKVC) for volunteers under age 55. A part time Volunteer Coordinator/Administrative Assistant assists the Director with the RSVP program. The Director is supervised by the dean of Student Services at Barton Community College (BCC). The RSVP program also has a participant of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) through SER National and funded by the US Department of Labor who works from 15-20 hours per week depending on budget. There is also a dedicated group of office volunteers who provide much needed assistance on a weekly basis.

Data on volunteers and volunteer stations is maintained through a software program called Volunteer Reporter. Volunteers' personal information as well as interests and skills are updated annually. Information on stations including status of MOU and volunteers assigned is updated annually as well. Hours worked are collected monthly from stations and recorded into the Volunteer Reporter. A hard copy of each monthly hours report is kept in each volunteer's file and in each station's file. These files are maintained in the RSVP office in a secure file. The data entry is done by the SCSEP participant and by an office volunteer specially trained in the database software.

The RSVP Director is Donna Baugh. Ms. Baugh has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Austin College in Texas; she has worked for more than ten years in social service program management. She also has extensive volunteer management experience from her former management position and has served as director of RSVP since January, 2011. Ms. Baugh also serves as a volunteer guardian with the Kansas Guardianship Program for a person with disabilities. The job duties for the Director include:

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oversight of the program, ensuring systems are in place to maintain day to day activities including matching volunteers with community needs; establishing an operating budget and monitoring the performance; planning, implementing and evaluating the program, activities, and fundraising; reporting; supervising the staff; preparing funding applications, participating in volunteer orientation, public relation and recognition activities, assisting with grant, sponsor, community and local donor events; preparing the memorandums of understanding; and working with the Advisory Council.

The Administrative Assistant/Volunteer Coordinator is Carol Danielson. Ms. Danielson retired to this area after 30 years management experience with a prominent national corporation in California. The job duties for this position include: preparing transmittals for expenses, posting payments and deposits, reconciling the RSVP records with records at BCC; assisting with reports and funding applications; maintaining all the financial records for the Meals on Wheels program; recruiting and enrolling volunteers; developing volunteer assignments and placing volunteers; working with stations and station managers; maintaining Memorandums of Understanding; and assisting with volunteer orientation, public relations and recognition activities as needed.

RSVP has worked with local non-profits and governmental agencies in this area for more than 30 years. Meals on Wheels has contracted with RSVP to run the day to day operation of the program for most of those 30 years. The Medical Transportation program has been in operation since the mid 1990's. In this area, RSVP is considered the resource for anything related to seniors and senior services.

Barton Community College (BCC) has an excellent reputation for fiscal management. A grant director is responsible for oversight of all grant-funded programs. The finance department prepares checks, reconciles bank statements and maintains records for audit. This department is also responsible for electronic requests for funds. BCC has been managing federal grants for most of its 45 year history. In addition to managing RSVP for more than 30 years, BCC has administered federal

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and state grants for Student Support Services, Upward Bound, Educational Opportunity Center, Title III Strengthening Institutions and Perkins Grants. Dean of Student Services oversees most of these grants and supervises the RSVP grant. All of the federal grants require defined outcomes and BCC is quite experienced with managing outcome based grants.

BCC provides office space for the RSVP program in a college-owned building in downtown Great Bend. Other indirect support provided by BCC includes: utilities; internet; telephone; copying, mailing and printing; and janitorial services. As per institutional procedure, RSVP has access to the same supplies as other programs including printer and copier supplies and paper. Vehicles are available for program staff for out of town meetings through established procedures. BCC provides fiscal and personnel management through the Dean of Student Services, Dean of Administration, Director of Grants, director of Human Resources, Comptroller and payroll/bill payment personnel. All full time employees are provided with benefits, including insurance and retirement. Each employee has a written job description developed by the program director and director of Human Resources. The RSVP director's performance is evaluated annually by the Dean of Student Services. The RSVP director evaluates the performance of the Administrative Assistant/Volunteer Coordinator annually. All evaluations are submitted to the President and are maintained in the Office of Human Resources.

The Advisory Council is an important tool for RSVP. Currently there are 11 members from four of the communities in Barton and Pawnee Counties. The director's goal is to have a representative from each of the communities represented by RSVP. Members are selected based on involvement in local community activities to bring needed perspective from diverse interest groups. The Advisory Council assists with program assessments including surveys from clients served by the volunteer stations, volunteer satisfaction surveys, and the annual assessment of the efficacy and effectiveness of RSVP. The Advisory Council assists with local fund-raising projects which are usually very successful. One

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such project in 2012, the sale of recycled Memorial Day Flowers, generated enough income for the program to pay for the annual recognition banquet. The Advisory Council is also involved with assisting the Director to identify unmet community needs and develop plans to address those needs. The current group is very dedicated and many have served on the Advisory Council for several years. At the 2012 recognition banquet, Jean Cavanaugh was recognized for 20 years of service to the RSVP Advisory Council. Currently all the Advisory Council members are volunteers. The director's goal is to expand the Advisory Council to include representatives from local governments, non-profits and community leaders.

The grants director at BCC and the RSVP director are always looking for new funding sources for the RSVP program. RSVP has been a United Way agency for more than 20 years and that support can be expected to continue. Meals on Wheels of Barton County has contracted with RSVP to provide the day to day operation of the program for 30 years; that income can be expected to continue. RSVP has an excellent reputation in the community and has been successful in securing small grants from local sources, such as the Golden Belt Community Foundation, for specific projects, such as yarn for the Busy Hands/Busy Hearts program. Midwest Energy has also supported some of the RSVP projects on a regular basis. No difficulties are anticipated in sustaining the required non-federal share of the RSVP budget.

Other

NA

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

NA