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Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Municipality of San Juan is the Capital City of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The mission of the Municipality of San Juan is to provide its citizens with a quality of life, watch over its public safety and search for alternatives in employment, access to quality health care, access to quality recreational programs and improve the economic possibilities of its populations.

Under the RSVP Program we propose the recruitment of 175 volunteers. This program is supervised by the Family and Community Department of the Municipality of San Juan. For this effort we are requesting the amount of \$59,307.00 in federal funds, and allocating \$142,546.00 in matched local funds.

Our primary focus area will be Healthy Futures, in which 48% of volunteers will meet the objective of vulnerable population, such as homeless and older adults and individuals with disabilities receiving food, transportation, or other services that help them allow them to live independently. Specifically the proposed activities will be addressed for Food Delivery, Transportation, Companionships and Preventing Elder Abuse. These volunteers will concentrate efforts in community private and public health facilities, such as: Veterans Hospital, Del Maestro Hospital, Metropolitan Hospital, San Francisco Hospital, Rio Piedras Primary Health Center and the San Juan Aging Center. This group is composed of 84 volunteers. The other 40% of volunteers will meet other community needs to serve vulnerable population such as: homeless, elderly and individuals with disabilities. This group is composed of 75 volunteers. Finally, the rest 12% will focus in Capacity Building Activities in our Community Centers to expand and enhance the delivery of services by generating additional human resources. These capacity building activities will involve our volunteers receiving workshops in order to update their skills in areas such as flower shops, bakery, jewelry creation, craftsmanship and sewing

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workshops. With these updates, our volunteers will polish their skills in order to provide better workshops to our target population of assistance of capacitation.

Strengthening Communities

The RSVP program sponsor is the City of San Juan, Capital of Puerto Rico and is part of the Family and

Community Department which supervises diverse programs providing comprehensive services to families. It is also the focal point for maintaining contact with the communities to assure that its services are meeting the critical needs of this population. According to 2010 Census the City of San Juan had a population of 395,326, from this amount, 23% of the San Juan population (92,717) are over the age of 60. Even though the general population had a decrease of 39,048, the elderly population had an increase of 9,599. the information provided by the Census 2010, also reflects that 35% of the older citizens are low the poverty line. Most of the elderly have to divert much of their income to receive health services, such as: medicines, medical appointments and transportation. The sponsor has had a long standing relationship with its community partners and has been able to build public awareness and support for its community partners through our relationship with the Community Relations Office and the use of radio. We also have a website which spreads the word to our

partners. Through these different means we emphasize on how the services provided by the seniors help to enrich their organizations. We work closely with the City's FGP program and its volunteers in helping support vulnerable seniors meet their health and social needs and thus helping them to live independently and providing them the opportunity to engage in meaningful volunteer opportunities. Referrals are made between programs; coordination of special activities such as: field and, beach day, and social activities involving both programs. Also, joint coordination with other community public and private organization are performed to enhance the skills and quality of life of both clients such as;

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educational talks and other services.

The RSVP Program also counts with the support network of the different programs of the Family and Community Department. In addition, we receive the collaboration of the Advisory Council which assist us in the coordination of activities, conferences among others resources. The RSVP volunteers that work at the community centers participate in all community the activities that are held.

The program addresses four (4) priority community needs: health and nutrition, human needs, homelessness and community service. One of the partners includes 5 health care facilities: 4 hospitals and one Diagnostic and Treatment Center (dispensary type facility) in which non-medical health care services are provided to patients particularly a large number of indigent, frail and lonely elderly as well as respite care to families. Health care delivery systems are in a critical situation, particularly public facilities. Many health care workers have relocated to hospital in the mainland in search of better salaries and working conditions leaving the Island with a severe shortage of trained staff. This situation is even more critical in San Juan in which the Island's Medical Center and the majority of major hospital facilities are located. Traditionally, local hospitals depend on family members to stay with patients during their hospital stay (days and night) including emergency room waiting to be served for nonmedical needs such as bathing, feeding, companionship, escort service, etc. These patients and particularly our low income frail elderly without this support system are in the greatest need for services and care and volunteers fill this gap.

Recruitment and Development

The City operates 13 Senior Citizen Centers and at Home Nursing Care facilities assisting staff in providing a comprehensive program of services to low income frail and disabled elderly as well as providing congregate meals and other homebound services. The RSVP Volunteers provide their services at 9 of these Senior Citizen Centers. In addition to these, there are 2 non-profit centers at "Cantera and Llorens Torres" where we have RSVP Volunteers. Our Volunteers also work at the City's

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Veterans Affairs and at the Persons with Disabilities Office providing needed clerical support, reception and orientation to citizens. Eight stations are housed at local community centers that work with tutoring students in risk of academic failure, helping out with Summer Camps, offering courses at the communities and assisting frail, bed-bound elderly at home cares, and services of a librarian to students after school hours. Finally, one of the partners is a private non-profit soup kitchen (La Fondita de Jesus) which is staffed almost entirely by Community Volunteers. They assist the agency in preparing and serving over 200 meals daily, laundry service and shower facilities for the homeless. Our RSVP Volunteers collaborate with other institutions when the Municipality of San Juan hosts community fairs. A high quality experience develops between our volunteers and our referrers with volunteer participants. Project staff understand the needs of the stations and communicates with them on a regular basis to ensure good communication. We meet with community partners during public events and through networking opportunities. Our goal is to assure that we have at least 176 Volunteers recruited, placed and retained providing a high level of service that addresses the community's needs. The project plans to maintain the 26 stations. Existing Volunteers have proven to be a source of recruitment by referring neighbors, friends and other peers from their communities and churches. A large percent of our Volunteers are retained each year. Much of this success is due to organizing trimester activities for the Volunteers such as educational forums, cultural and social activities in which the Volunteers regularly participate. These activities help provide them with a sense of belonging to a team and enhance their self-value as a volunteer. Furthermore, all Volunteers receive reimbursement for travel and meals. Non-federal funds contributed by the sponsor supplement those of RSVP assuring all Volunteers are covered in these areas. The City's Office of Human Resources encourages project staff to participate in relevant training workshops and seminars as well as sponsors their participation in others. The Staff also participate in annual events sponsored by the Senior Corps Program such as the National Conference on Volunteering and Service or other

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designated seminars as well as those provided by the State Office. Training to Volunteers is organized by the project staff. An initial orientation is provided to Volunteers about the program on a variety of general topics related to volunteerism, responsibilities, regulations, etc. More detailed training is provided by each station relating to their specific tasks to assure that Volunteers understand their assignments and the protocols involving their station. Stations supervisors often invite Volunteers to attend conferences or bring in speakers to keep them about updated in topics of interests. The RSVP program organizes an Annual Banquet in which all of the Volunteers are recognized by the Mayor of the city for their service and contribution to the program. In addition, each of the service stations recognizes their Volunteers for the valuable services and contributions provided through a variety of activities held throughout the year.

Program Management

To ensure a high quality experience for RSVP Volunteers, the project has developed service descriptions that specify the duties of the Volunteers in each station, evaluate Volunteers' skills, abilities, special interests and experiences in order to determine an appropriate placement. We foster the Volunteer's participation by presenting them with the opportunity to share their experiences and ideas to develop strategies and improve services. These descriptions directly relate to the specified community needs with input from our Planning and Community Relations Offices and our stations. The Program's Director periodically visits the station supervisors to discuss progress, identify any problem areas and/or barriers to promote and strengthen the project's operations. At least once a year the Project Director will meet with Volunteers to obtain their impressions about the service and evaluate their accomplishments during the year. The Program has developed tools or instruments in collecting statistical data from the stations and documenting the result of activities, particularly those related to the performance measures of monthly reports. It has developed and will administer surveys and questionnaires for the services stations, RSVP Volunteers and the advisory council to determine

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the effectiveness of services carried out and the satisfaction of Seniors. The Program receives periodic reports from the City's Finance Office, both financial and in-kind, so that they can reconcile balances and ensure that all funds have been properly accounted for and that all resources will be used efficiently and effectively.

Program staff meets with the coordinators of each service to be oriented about the philosophy of the Program, the monthly duties and mutual responsibilities; establishment of a Memorandum of agreement monthly visit are scheduled to verify the operation of our Volunteers and to clarify doubts to the personnel about the service.

Annually, the Program submits to the Municipality of San Juan documentation informing the needed cash to match the Federal funds according to the submitted proposal to the Corporation for National & Community Service. The facility where the program is located, the janitorial service, electricity, water, phone and internet service are provided by the sponsor as an in-kind contribution

Organizational Capability

a. The Municipality of San Juan has had extensive experience in the proposed program area. For the past 40 years the City has been successful in implementing RSVP and FGP programs. These programs have provided significant opportunities for low-income elderly in providing services and being the recipients of the valuable work carried out by volunteers. Furthermore, the City's Family and Community Department has under its responsibility the implementation of several other programs addressing the needs of the growing elderly population including 14 Senior Day Centers, Homeless Program, and Program to provide transportation for elderly and handicapped persons, several Head Start and Early Head Start Programs, Recreational Program for Elderly, Companion program among others. It receives Federal funds from numerous programs as well as the State Office on Aging to provide services to Seniors. We consistently meet our Volunteer goals and objectives.

b. There are 3 key program staff: Project Director, Field Coordinator and Secretary. The Project

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Director has been with the program since 1984 providing her leadership, supervision and management skills to deliver quality services. She is a licensed social worker with over 30 year of experience working with the elderly population. She has increased the number of Volunteers in the RSVP program reaching a top count of 400 from an initial 89 Volunteers. This program year 2011-2012 will start working with 175 Volunteers due to the recent cuts in the budget. The Field Coordinator has over 20 year of experience working with Seniors. She visits the stations and acts as a liaison with Supervisors, coordinates training activities making sure they are pertinent to the Volunteer's needs, and meets periodically with Volunteers to keep them active and interested in their service. The Secretary, in addition to clerical duties is responsible for reviewing and timely processing Volunteer's reimbursements for travel and meals. She also posts the hours worked by Volunteers.

c. The City of San Juan has extensive past experience managing Federal funds. As a public agency and mayor city it receives hundreds of millions of dollars in funds yearly and manages an equally large budget. It has a functional and adequate system ready to receive, manage and report the use of RSVP funds. The Program has received good financial evaluations from the CNCS for the past 25 years. The Program's Director receives periodic balance sheets so that she can monitor project expenses and assure that they are all expended in a timely basis.

d. The Sponsor provides the program's project staff with adequate facilities, equipment, supplies and materials to carry out the services and contributes 75% of the total costs of the Program. It is committed to the RSVP program and has prepared clearly defined roles for staff and administrators as well as all necessary internal policies and procedures for an efficient management.

 

Other

Strategies Initiative #5

Disaster Relief Recovery and Preparedness Focus Areas:

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- Skilled Volunteers in Disasters:

Our RSVP program will coordinate with certified personnel of Homeland Security to train, certify and prepare Volunteers to be ready to assist Senior Citizens at disvantage communities in case long term disaster recovery efforts are required.

In Puerto Rico we have to be prepared for any storm or hurricane during a period of 6 months. This is from the 1st of June thru the 30th of November. All the population has to be alert and prepared. We will be offering different conferences about this subject, andthe Volunteers and they that will be trained. During the past year grant 2010 RSVP Program has trained a total of 60 Volunteers who are now prepared to work with the frail elderly and with their communities when there is a notice natural of a disaster.

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A