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Executive Summary

"An estimated 600 RSVP volunteers will serve in Linn and Benton Counties, Oregon. They will help seniors to live independently and in their own homes through a network of 70 volunteer station placement sites such as food delivery, companionship, transportation, literacy on fraud and abuse prevention with finances and health care. The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures. At the end of the three-year grant, over 8,000 seniors will be assisted. The CNCS federal investment of \$87,634 will be supplemented by \$37,882 in local funding."

Strengthening Communities

RSVP of Linn and Benton Counties provides services to residents across Linn and Benton counties. Although both counties are rural and are composed of mostly smaller towns and communities, they do display diversity in key demographic and economic indicators. As with communities across the country, both have been hard hit by job losses, home foreclosures and the downturn in other key business and economic indicators. Our program service area stretches from the eastern foothills of the Oregon Coast Range across the Willamette Valley, to the crest of the Cascade Mountains.

Benton and Linn Counties encompass 2976 square miles, with a 2010 population estimate of 202,251. According to the US Census, using 2008 data, median household income in Benton County was \$53,661, approximately 7% higher than the statewide average of \$50,165. Benton County's economy is based on education, high-tech industries and services, agriculture, health care, and, to a limited extent, lumber and wood products manufacturing. Linn County's median household income of \$45,838 is nearly 10% lower than the state average. Employment opportunities primarily come from agriculture, lumber and wood products, construction, rare metals manufacturing, and services. Linn County labor also produces manufactured housing and is a major global producer of common and perennial ryegrass and grass seed. The unemployment rate in Linn County is still among the highest

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in Oregon and the Willamette Valley, yet slowly ebbing downward. It was 12% in 2012, down 0.8% from the last year.

Twelve percent of the population of Benton County are seniors 65 years and older. Including those age 55+, this represents a sizable pool of potential RSVP volunteers to further help and assist within our communities. Sixteen percent of the population of Linn County are seniors 65 years and older. Linn County has a higher than average 65+ senior populations when compared to Oregon's 13% while Benton County's rate is slightly under the statewide average at 12%. In Benton County, 15.6% of the total population lives in poverty, likely due to the large number of university students in Benton County (Oregon State University). In Linn County 14% of the total population live in poverty.

Given the effect the economic downturn has had on the region, in conjunction with the growing senior population, the Service Categories identified within the Healthy Futures Focus area of this application will greatly benefit many within the service area. The planned activities that will affect the senior demographic are crucial as this particular segment of the population continues annual growth. Many of these activities occur within the signature programs overseen by RSVP staff. As many of the organizations previously associated with RSVP will be graduated out of its roster, staff will meet with key staff at those organizations that remain and identified in the focus areas. Both these individuals and internal staff will be further trained on the six focus areas, resulting service categories, and expected outcomes. Common tools will be developed to ensure adequate and correct measurement of these activities will be performed.

National performance measures will be met through this focus area through the following activities.

Aging in Place -- H8:

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Five Meals on Wheels stations provide in-home delivery services to hundreds of homebound clients every weekday in primarily rural towns. In addition, "blizzard boxes" are provided to accommodate the clients during emergencies. Two transportation programs transport seniors and clients with disabilities to medical appointments, grocery shopping and other necessities of life. One faith-based program assists volunteers with transportation, friendly visiting and ramp building. According to the Census 2006-2010, Linn County has both a higher than state average number of seniors over age 65 and number of persons living in poverty. Benton County has a higher percentage of persons living in poverty. According to the Oregon State University Healthy Aging Institute the Oregon projections for aging are higher than the nation's average, as older adults currently comprise 13% of the state's population, and will comprise more than 25% of the population by 2050.

Aging in Place -- H13:

Public transportation in the county exists only in a limited area in this largely rural county, and is restricted in its hours of operation, seven am to seven pm with curbside service; it is not a viable option for most, even more so for seniors and the disabled. Providing transportation to medical appointments for this demographic ensures they are not only receiving necessary health care, but that it is done so in a safe and friendly manner through the door-to-door escort service provided by the volunteers. The Trans-Med program overseen by RSVP staff has provided this service to those in need in Linn and Benton Counties for four years.

Seniors that find themselves alone at this point of their lives also face other challenges that can be alleviated through the service of senior volunteers. RSVP has developed programs to provide friendly visiting to those who are homebound, usually with no family within the area. In many cases, it is members of the homebound seniors family that live out of the area that will request this reassuring service. These volunteers have received extensive training to assist clients until the time they feel they

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are able to successfully cope on their own. Both of these programs increase the sociability of people who have previously felt isolated or depressed because of their current living situations.

Respite care is another area that can increase the quality of life for the aging population provided by the Friendly Visitor Program. As family members age in place, their primary caregivers often feel overwhelmed and exhausted in what can be a very demanding role. Receiving a regular time of relief from this situation with the knowledge that their loved one is in the care of a trusted, peer volunteer is essential for their physical and mental health. For over 30 years that this program has been coordinated by RSVP staff, it has reached to families throughout the county. Exhausted caregivers receive a much needed time of relief from the strain of caring for a loved one on a daily basis.

For those homebound with difficulty obtaining nutritious food, volunteers involved in the area's Food and Friends programs faithfully deliver hot meals throughout the week. A positive consequence of this frequent service is the bond of friendship that builds between volunteer and client, furthering their quality of life.

Local seniors are also the beneficiaries of organizations that have developed programs for their particular needs. Among these are the local Senior Centers. Volunteers serve in diverse ways through these organizations to assist the seniors in their local -- and sometimes remote -- areas. Service activities can vary from day to day depending upon the need of the senior clients, but all share the common theme of retaining quality of life through genuine companionship for the aging in our community.

Obesity and Food (H10 and 11):

Hunger is a fact of life for many Americans and Oregon is not immune as it is ranked 19th out for the 50 states for people lacking nutritional substance. Linn and Benton Counties are not immune to the hunger issue where 20% of the population seeks food from Linn and Benton Counties Food Share, the

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food pantries, and with the Gleaners. Volunteers placed at these volunteer stations will organize and distribute food to those in need.

Access to Care (H2):

A study from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services found that 47% of people on Medicare do not understand their benefits. Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA) volunteers are trained advocates for to help those on Medicare understand their benefits. From choosing the best supplemental policy to helping with billing problems to helping spot Medicare Fraud and Abuse these volunteers extend their knowledge and expertise to all who need it. Open enrollment is particularly a busy time for this program which is coordinated by RSVP staff. Even though these volunteers maintain their own work station with the larger RSVP office, additional space is warranted to them during these hectic few months to accommodate their constant appointments. A special element of this program is the outreach to those of lower income; the savings brought to them through the work of the volunteers is a certain help for their every day expenses.

Recruitment and Development

Quality Assignments

RSVP intends to provide a meaningful experience for its volunteers in their chosen service. To achieve this, it is imperative of the program to provide volunteers engaging and challenging options in which to utilize their skills and expertise. To achieve this, the program has developed a data skills bank of all participating volunteers. When volunteers register with the program, they are asked to indicate their interest and skills listed on the back of the registration form. This information is then used to offer the best volunteer opportunity in the event the volunteer doesn't have a volunteer opportunity decided. In working with staff, volunteers are also exposed to different opportunities that match their interests and expertise; often times the name of an organization does not describe what volunteer

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service is needed there. Only by this personal interaction is the volunteer able to aptly assess where they wish to share their talents.

To ensure proper placement of the volunteers, RSVP follow-ups with a 30 day verbal survey usually conducted via phone and a 90 day written survey. The surveys give the volunteer an opportunity to talk about their placement and give them an easy out to switch volunteer opportunities. It also gives the staff feedback on how well they are placing the volunteers and gives them insight on how to do better placements in the future.

Training Provided

It is essential that the program offer tools to its volunteers prior to their undertaking a volunteer assignment. This is a routine task for those volunteers involved in RSVP's signature programs as significant trainings are provided so they might heighten their skills; ongoing training for these volunteers is offered as well.

Volunteer position descriptions, information on the volunteer station, and a volunteer schedule are given to those volunteers placed at volunteer sites; more intense training is then provided to the volunteer by the volunteer station. Volunteer stations are experts in their field and provide the particular nuances of the organization to the volunteer further integrating them into the culture of the organization. This notion is ensured through communication between program and stations staff. For instance, SHIBA requires volunteers to become certified which entails the volunteer completing an intense training curriculum of online modules, ten hours of internship, and yearly training of at least 12 hours.

Recruit a Volunteer Pool

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Through Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments' (COG) experience in providing individualized services to people with different socio-economic backgrounds, abilities, personalities, and affiliations, RSVP has come to understand the importance of diversity within volunteer pools and recruitment. The community recognizes this agency as the one who serves diverse populations, therefore attracting all types of people to the program.

Recruitment of volunteers for RSVP is an ongoing activity and conducted in a variety of means.

RSVP mobilizes community resources and fills gaps in service through the assistance of volunteers and strategic partnerships. Currently, RSVP works with nearly 70 volunteer stations using the Volunteer Match website, Volunteer Wanted Ads in Generations -- a quarterly publication from COG and the local newspaper, radio programs at least 12 times a year, Public Service Announcements to highlight RSVP volunteer activity, and on average gives twelve presentations a year to local community organizations.

Mobilizing community resources is largely accomplished through our many recruitment processes. For example, when tax season arrives and Tax-Aide volunteers are needed, we mobilize volunteer resources through online newsletters, volunteer communications, and local media. Electronic communications to partner organizations, using email, websites and other forms of social media are also used to help spread the word among our volunteers and potential volunteers. RSVP will partner with Hands On Linn-Benton to offer community volunteers a path for selecting volunteer positions within RSVP or with non-RSVP nonprofit partners.

RSVP frequently assists agencies with community resources via information-sharing, volunteer referrals, training, and connecting them, when feasible, with other agencies to collaborate in reaching

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their common goals. RSVP has a one of a kind position in the community because of our collaboration with over 100 non-profits, understanding their missions as well as staying up to date on their needs. This knowledge makes it easier for us to refer volunteers and people seeking their services to them.

Retain and Recognize Volunteers

RSVP of Linn and Benton Counties believes in on-going recognition as well as a yearly volunteer recognition luncheons to acknowledge volunteers for their service. The volunteers receive greeting cards fitting the situation, whether it be to celebrate a birthday or to share the sorrow of loss; they are highlighted on the RSVP website as well as in Generations, a quarterly newspaper publication, and are distinguished at two formal luncheon celebrations, one in Benton County and one in Linn County, held in the fall of each year. The program also nominates volunteers for service awards, locally and on the state- and nation- wide levels, a practice that will continue.

RSVP continually recruits, retains, and recognizes volunteers; however, the success of the program comes from the personal relationships formed by the volunteers as well as the staff. When a volunteer has a great experience in their chosen service, they are eager to share with others. This is further demonstrated through the increase of volunteer activity after the annual recognition luncheons. At these events, the volunteers have the opportunity to meet people new to them and share stories of their experiences; this not only renews their enthusiasm for their work, but in some cases results in other volunteers joining with them in their efforts.

Program Management

Volunteer Stations' Management

The RSVP director has received volunteer management training certification through Energize, Inc.,

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an international volunteer management training company and has been certified as a Volunteer Manager Trainer through Oregon Volunteers by Betty Stallings, a World Renown Volunteer Manager. These skills have helped several volunteer stations increase their volunteer force by helping them become better volunteer managers. RSVP encourages all volunteer stations to treat their volunteers more like employees. This means all volunteers receive position descriptions, a schedule of time to serve, and detailed training on their positions including safety procedures.

RSVP staff will visit each station yearly and will have communication monthly. RSVP also performs annual station assessments to ensure the volunteer stations are in compliance. The RSVP staff keeps detailed volunteer station folders, which include checklists to ensure complete compliance with Senior Corps regulations. Staff works with stations supervisors to further their knowledge in volunteer management, and in particular with the various nuances necessary with RSVP guidelines.

RSVP continually seeks the development of volunteer sites that provide both for specific community needs and meaningful work for the volunteers. This is accomplished through the program's established network of collaboration, as well as, recommendations provided by the members of the Advisory Council. The association is furthered through valuable technical assistance offered by CNCS and the National Senior Corps Association's (NSCA) Best Practices web page; this information is most helpful in the development of the work plans, assignment plans, and assessment tools.

Develop capacity for Community Need outside of Primary Focus Area

Attention will be paid to strengthening the notion of the national focus areas and performance measures when working with organizations outside of the realm of the chosen Primary Focus Area. Many of these sites have already been identified, with the process to be an ongoing activity. The RSVP advisory council will conduct a community needs assessment survey on a regular basis; the results of

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this survey offer good direction as to where RSVP volunteers can create the most impact. Staff will utilize established relations with identified sites to development placements for RSVP volunteers to meet determined community needs.

Graduate Volunteer Stations

Those volunteer sites not categorized in the Primary Focus or other Focus Areas will be graduated out prior to the new fiscal year. A letter will be sent to these organizations followed by a personal conversation with the project director. Stations will be asked to notify RSVP if circumstances should change within the scope of their service allowing for volunteers to fall under the identifying parameters. It is felt that disruption to the volunteers themselves might be at a minimum as it was reiterated through the development of this application that many of the existing volunteers serve at multiple locations, many of which have been identified within the determined focus areas. For those volunteers that might not fall in this category, they will be offered other volunteer opportunities that could benefit from their skills and expertise that do fit into these categories.

Measurement and Collection of Outcomes

RSVP staff will work with staff of stations identified in the work plans to coordinate the process of performance measurement. As teams, they will identify the best manner in which this information can be ascertained from their clientele. Measurement tools will be developed, and timelines established to ensure timely results for reporting requirements. The majority of the organizations that will be involved in this process currently have such procedures in place due to uniform local funding requirements. RSVP staff will first determine if such tools are in place, and have had accurate, proven results in the past; if so, these will be a good starting point as it is the desire of the program to be as unobtrusive to these organizations as possible. The signature programs of RSVP do have such

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measurement tools in place that will be revisited and revised as necessary.

Manage project resources

COG works closely with the RSVP funders, while RSVP staff communicates regularly with the work stations and volunteers to receive and disseminate information regarding the specific impacts of programs. We use Volgistics, volunteer database to record and manage information, in addition to annual surveys to determine the perception of our stakeholders, including partner work stations, volunteers, and clients in our service area.

COG employs both qualitative and quantitative methods of measurement to assess programmatic and project impact. The data gathered from the variety of measurement tools used by the program provide demonstrable evidence of the strong impacts made in the community through the volunteers' service.

The information is used as a basis to report outcomes to potential funders and community stakeholders while also demonstrating impact of effort to volunteers.

Organizational Capability

Provide Programmatic and Fiscal Oversight who will oversee RSVP of Lincoln County

RSVP of Linn and Benton Counties will employ three employees, a part-time director who will also oversee the RSVP of Lincoln County, a part-time support staff, and a fulltime coordinator. All RSVP staff report to the director, while the director reports to the director of Senior and Disability Services, Scott Bond, who reports to Cynthia Solie, Executive Director of Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (COG). Senior and Disability Services is the largest part of the sponsoring agency. Bond's knowledge and expertise has proven invaluable to the program with different perspectives and

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insights offered, as he has worked with the local senior population for over 15 years. He has also taken a keen interest in the financial course of the program as local funding sources are decreasing, offering ideas and plans to offset the situation. As COG, it has a governing Board of Directors of elected officials for Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties which meet on a quarterly basis and help keep the program focused on meeting the needs of the community; the program also maintains an Advisory Council that meets bi-monthly.

RSVP has been assigned a staff member of the sponsoring organization's accounting department to develop monthly financial statements and provide guidance in the development of the annual budget. The project director works closely with this staff person to ensure the program is receiving planned financial resources as expected, and that expenditures are on target to annualized budget. These financial statements are provided to the sponsor liaison on a monthly basis, and to the Board of Directors for their review and approval at their quarterly meetings. Accounting staff also works closely with staff of the firm which conducts RSVP's annual financial audit.

Defined Staff Positions

Scott Bond, Director of Senior and Disability Services has been employed with COG for over 15 years. He has a long history of working in the field of service for seniors and the disabled. Tamara Rosser has been with COG for just over two years; however, has been heading RSVP of Lincoln County for a total of six years. Both serve on various boards for civic engagement, advisory councils, and partner with programs which have the same mission of promoting senior engagement and independent living. COG's Finance Department has a well-developed and proven fiscal management system to track financial and in-kind data, with significant experience in Government non-profits. Alison Covey, Finance Director for COG, served the capacity of Financial Director for school districts and has recently joined the ranks of COG as the Financial Director. Alison brings years of accounting

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experience with a specialty in grants administration.

Covey and Bond provide supervision for the grant as in-kind and do not receive funds from the grant. Tamara Rosser, will serve as the program staff as well as two employees who will be hired after the grant begins.

Track record in Primary Focus Area, Senior Service, Managing Volunteers and Performance
Measurement

The sponsoring agency Oregon Cascades Council of Governments (COG) is the leader in senior issues in Lincoln County, serving as the Senior and Disability Services and the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties. As the Medicaid long-term care agency for our region, we provide a wide variety of financial, medical and long-term care services for low-income clients and their families. Senior and Disability Services determines eligibility for medical and service programs to assist people with disabilities 18-64 years of age as well as older adults 65 years or older. Some of our programs such as those funded through the Older Americans Act, serve people as early as 60 years of age. If eligible, people may qualify for full or limited medical benefits, Lifeline, transportation services, in-home care services, subsidized payment for services in community-based care facilities such as adult foster care, assisted living, and residential care. If determined eligible for services, Senior and Disability Services also facilitates supplemental payment for nursing home care. Other benefits coordinated by Senior and Disability Services include Food Stamps, Senior Meals and Home Delivered Meals, Family Caregiver Support Program, and Oregon Project Independence. In addition, our agency provides information and referral for Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties. This service includes referrals for programs such as: outreach, case coordination, prescription drug benefits, energy assistance, low income housing, furniture, food, the Senior Companion Program, Senior Peer

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Counseling Program, Adult Day Care, as well as other services. The local Senior and Disability Services office is the primary agency for the licensing and monitoring of adult foster homes in Linn, Benton and Lincoln counties. Senior and Disability Services is the appointed agency for investigating allegations of abuse, neglect and financial exploitation of people with disabilities 18-64 years of age and seniors 65 and older through our Adult Protective Services program.

COG has a successful record of volunteer management, strong involvement and commitment to improving social conditions for seniors and serving the community with valuable impact-based programming. COG is proud of their record for operating and administering the Meals on Wheels Program (MOW), working with AmeriCorps Volunteers, and the Senior Services and Disability Services Advisory Councils. MOW volunteers number over 400 and serve at 11 different sites. The AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteers took the lead in the coordination of the 2008, 2009, and 2010 community health fairs, reaching thousands of seniors and working with over 50 community sponsors. The Senior Services and Disability Services Advisory Councils provide on-going leadership to the agency, providing hours of service in the monitoring of contracts, area planning, and advocacy. COG also has a successful track record managing volunteer programs with outstanding community impact.

COG provides support for RSVP's focus on creating and sharing effective practices for setting annual goals and managing volunteer data. Ongoing trainings will be sought, such as, CNCS conferences and workshops, along with access to websites such as the resource center help all RSVPs stay current on impact-based programming and volunteer trends.

Senior and Disability Services has a mission to provide leadership and services for seniors and people with disabilities to enhance their independence, dignity, choice, and individual well being. The strength

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of our background in senior issues will help us meet the performance measure of healthy futures.

Financial management systems

Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (COG) has a solid financial system and extensive knowledge of acquiring and managing grant funds. COG has an annual budget of over \$18 million in revenues received through Medicaid, Older Americans Act, State General Funds, local dues, fundraising, fee for services, and contract revenues. Their fully integrated financial software has the ability to follow activities and contracts separately while tracking them within the organizational structure and financial reporting. COG has managed Federal grants from the Small Business Administration, Area Agency on Aging, USDA, and FEMA and COG conducts an annual single audit accomplished by an external independent auditor.

An annual RSVP budget is proposed based on expected funding sources for the upcoming year and referred to on a monthly basis by the finance department as well as the RSVP director to ensure RSVP is on budget. RSVP staff purchase office and program supplies, and process volunteer mileage reimbursement forms with all account payables and receivables passing through the COG's finance office. All expenses are approved by the sponsor before any incurred expenses are paid to ensure the compliance with the A-87 Circular.

Successfully managing volunteer programs

Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (COG) has successfully overseen RSVP of Lincoln County for the past two years. RSVP of Lincoln County has a successful record of volunteer management, strong involvement and commitment to improving the social conditions for seniors and serving the community with valuable impact-based programming for the last forty years. The Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA/Medicare) program client services grew 26% during the

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most recent open enrollment period. RSVP volunteer Dr. Richard Reynolds was awarded the 2011 Oregon Governor's Volunteer of the Year Award for this region and Kathy Stander, received recognition for AARP of Oregon for her work on AARP's Driver's Safety Program. COG will bring the same strong guidance to RSVP of Linn and Benton Counties to improve upon the successes they have already achieved.

COG provides staff support for RSVP's strong focus on creating and sharing effective practices for setting annual goals and managing volunteer data. The RSVP staff will coordinate the four signature programs, each with clearly defined goals and outcomes. The director has extensive leadership experience including being recognized by AARP of Oregon for her efforts concerning seniors. She also serves as the Seniors Serving Oregon Coalition Chair, a coalition of all Senior Corps Programs in Oregon. CNCS conferences and workshops, along with access to websites such as the National Resource Center help staff stay current with trends in impact-based programming. COG successfully tracks volunteer records with Volgistics, a volunteer database.

Organization's capacity to assure the project has adequate facilities, equipment, supplies, etc.

Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (COG) has a regional office in Corvallis (Benton County); however, Albany will be the primary office as it is the main office for COG. RSVP will have five computers available for all staff and office volunteers. Fax and copy machines are available for use by all staff. Three phones are available for use by RSVP in the Albany office and one desk with a phone and computer in the Corvallis office. RSVP follows COG policies and procedures for personnel management, travel reimbursement, purchasing and supplies. Office and program supplies are either purchased by RSVP staff or received as in-kind support from program supporters.

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All RSVP systems are integrated within our existing system including e-mail communications, phones, conference calling capabilities and internet access. Conference space for trainings and related volunteer activities is also available at each location. RSVP incorporates well-established sponsor policies and procedures into all of our operations. Personnel are supported by an agency-wide human resource manager. Travel policies and clearly defined roles for staff and administrators are in place as is union representation for non-management personnel. In addition, RSVP has developed its own policies and procedures handbook in accordance with those of COG and CNCS which will be supplied upon request.

Organization's procedures or systems for self-assessment, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

RSVP has several assessments conducted annually and the results are compiled by the RSVP staff and a sub-committee of the advisory council. The assessments are adapted from the CNCS Resource Center and are completed by RSVP volunteers, the advisory council, RSVP volunteer stations, and community partners, such as, United Way of Benton and Lincoln Counties and Lincoln County Commission on Children and Families.

The assessment results as used by the RSVP staff and advisory council to evaluate the effectiveness of RSVP in the community and its strengths and weaknesses. The results are then used in the strategic planning session which plans how to overcome the weaknesses and how to maintain the strength of the program. Every quarter, the advisory council and staff review the strategic plan to determine if the plan is still on track or if adjustments need to be made.

Other

NA