



## **Narratives**

### **Executive Summary**

Allegheny County Human Resources Development Commission, Inc. (HRDC) will operate the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) in Allegheny and Garrett County, Maryland. RSVP volunteers provide skills and needed services to organization's at little or no cost, a financial benefit especially in lean economic conditions.

HRDC will recruit, train, and place Senior volunteers at volunteers stations (community non-profits) throughout Allegheny and Garrett Counties. Senior volunteers will provide education supports to youth, tax preparation services to seniors, technical/trade skills for nonprofit organizations, and assistance to older retirees.

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program will enhance the capacities of organization's who serve as volunteer stations because it will provide them with needed volunteers to help them meet their mission.

### **Strengthening Communities**

Allegheny County is the second most western county in Maryland. Largely rural and covering some 425 square miles, Allegheny County is 150 miles west of Washington, D.C. Over 50% of the total land area lies on grades of 25% or greater. Only 20% of the land area has grades of 8% or less. Cumberland is the largest of seven political subdivisions. The total population is approximately 70,000 with about one-third living in or around the City of Cumberland. Approximately 23% of the total population is age sixty (60) or older and 10% of persons sixty or older live at or below 100% of poverty. Allegheny County is homogeneous with minorities representing less than 2% of the total population. Due to a dearth of employment opportunities in the county, younger persons generally leave the area upon graduation from high school or college to seek more promising career options leaving an "aging in place" population.

HRDC is the designated Community Action Agency for Allegheny County. November 2012 will mark

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the 47th year of continuous operation for the private, non-profit Agency. The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) operates as a department within the HRDC along with Head Start and Early Head Start, Adult Medical Day Services, and Housing and Community Resources. The latter department includes weatherization, homeless services, energy assistance, tax preparation, and Section 8 housing. In total, the HRDC has over 170 employees who operate 30 programs from 16 different sites throughout Allegany County.

Each program, by virtue of funding source requirements, tracks numbers of unduplicated clients, the type of services provided, and monies involved in providing said services. In addition, each program receives on-going feedback from program participants and conducts periodic need surveys/analyses applicable to their respective endeavor(s). Each program within the Agency has also developed a network of volunteers (some of whom are affiliated with RSVP and some of whom are not) by virtue of their long-standing operation and long-standing relationship with the community.

HRDC, as the AAA has developed a substantial network of relationships with fellow service agencies, State agencies, civic and professional organizations, Allegany College of Maryland, Frostburg State University, and the senior community at-large by virtue of its visibility and long-standing presence in Allegany County. The AAA, under the auspices of the HRDC, assists in the development of other organizations' capacities and will integrate senior service into their activities by following time-tested methods of service involvement/capacity building utilized by the HRDC.

There is one newspaper in Allegany County, the Cumberland Times-News. The HRDC has an excellent working relationship with this provider. In point of fact, the HRDC has contracted with a copy writer to highlight one program per month in the newspaper. In addition, the Agency's Board Chairperson has generously sponsored a long series of public service announcements featuring programs/events involving the HRDC. The HRDC envisions a similar approach to promote volunteerism and constructive involvement with other organizations and programs within the

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community. The positive experiences will foster word of mouth information-sharing among constituents.

With the baby boomer generation beginning to retire, there is a huge resource pool from which organizations and community's can draw upon. Senior volunteers can mentor young professionals, provide education supports to youth, technical/trade skills for nonprofit organizations, and assistance to older retirees.

Senior volunteers will be placed at volunteers stations throughout the community and will work alongside volunteers of all ages.

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program will enhance the capacities of organization's who serve as volunteer stations because it will provide them with needed volunteers to help them meet their mission. RSVP volunteers provide skills and needed services to organization's at little or no cost, a financial benefit especially in lean economic conditions.

Minorities represent less than 9% of the total population of Allegany County (of the 9% , 8% is Black/African American, 0.8% is Asian and 0.01% is American Indian/Alaska Native). In an effort to serve special (minority) populations, HRDC partners with members of the local faith community whose congregations emerge from economically disadvantaged neighborhoods around the City of Cumberland in an attempt to enhance the visibility of the senior services. Though partnerships for specific Senior events have had measured success, minority seniors have not, as yet, become mainstream participants in senior center activities and programming. Rather, minority seniors have maintained a closer relationship with church organizations that have historically been better able to maintain an environment of trust and common cause.

Native American seniors and seniors with limited English proficiency are virtually non-existent in Allegany County. The remaining priority senior population is the rural poor, living in rugged and geographically isolated areas at both the eastern and western extremes of the County. Though such

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seniors may desire services, they desire them in or near their own communities and are often reluctant to travel to obtain the services. Winters in Allegany County are harsh and forbidding making road travel often hazardous, so their reluctance is understood.

### **Recruitment and Development**

The Area Agency on Aging focused on recruitment in Allegany County Garrett County in Fy2013. New stations were established and new volunteers were recruited.

In 2013, the focus will be on recruiting new stations where volunteers can be placed. During 2012, a station with a large number of volunteers closed. Those volunteers need places to offer their services. The RSVP Coordinator will provide assistance to newly recruited volunteer stations in developing volunteer assignment descriptions, impact measures and recruitment, training and retention of volunteers. As stated previously, the AAA currently has on-going partnerships with Allegany College of Maryland and Frostburg State University with whom the department engages in numerous training (both formal and informal) events and intern exchanges. Therefore, in addition to tapping existing staff from both internal and partner organizations the AAA has already established on-going training in continuing and higher education. HRDC also offers on-site on-the-job training via any of the HRDC's varied and diverse programs.

In addition to the recognition and major appreciation events held, it is critical to recognize and reward the volunteers. The RSVP Coordinator will work with the stations to hold small recognition events to reward the volunteers to keep current volunteers and attract new volunteers. The RSVP Coordinator will maintain a positive working relationship with the stations and volunteers to sustain the program.

### **Program Management**

HRDC's history reflects many benchmarks of achievement resulting from innovative programming, quality of program management, and service delivery. To indentify community needs HRDC will

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utilize the Local Management Board of Allegany County's Acute Needs Assessment and Service Gap Identification by Holleran Consulting as well as statistical information and meeting minutes from the development of HRDC's current strategic plan.

HRDC understands the importance of collaborations to be successful. HRDC is part of a strong network of human service agencies that work together to meet the needs of their clients, coordinating services and preventing duplication. HRDC will call on its existing network of partners to identify volunteer stations and develop high quality volunteer assignments that address specified community needs and provide meaningful volunteer placements.

Once sites are identified, a representative from each volunteer station will meet with the RSVP Manager to outline responsibilities and expectations of volunteer station supervisors. Each station supervisor will be responsible for: working with the RSVP Director develop a specific volunteer description that will be provided to the volunteer; supervise the performance of each volunteer placed at their station in accordance with the RSVP Contract; verify and sign weekly in-kind tracking sheets and forward to the RSVP Manager; be responsible for compliance with applicable health and safety regulations; complete and submit all required reports.

In return, HRDC will provide: initial on-site training for each station supervisor and follow-up training as necessary to ensure full compliance with program requirements; identify, orient, and refer volunteers (s) for site placements with the volunteer station ; provide support to assist the volunteers in eliminating any barriers; which would restrict their participation and work with the volunteer station regarding issues and problems that may arise during the volunteer placement; provide one-on-one volunteer job specific skills coaching/training as needed.

As a Community Action Agency, HRDC is required to comply with the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) requirements of the Community Services Block Grant. ROMA is an approach in which to develop outcome-based management strategies that assist in building

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accountability in the operations of the organization. It provides a means in which the organization can continually evaluate the effectiveness of each program and develop strategies for improvements in performance.

In addition to ROMA, HRDC employs a systematic process to program management which compliments ROMA for the most effective and efficient monitoring of program information and outcomes. Together this system provides a mechanism to track and demonstrate the concrete impacts of the project and its volunteers. The RSVP Director will develop outcomes for the program and monitor the program operations and performance daily through reviewing case notes and reports to assure all goal and objectives are met.

The RSVP Director will maintain information in a centralized computerized system to track program and performance progress. This system will allow HRDC to accurately report program progress.

Through the organization's Program Progress Reporting system, the RSVP Director will report the quarterly program outcome results to the Department Director and Executive Director. At the end of each program quarter, the Department Director and Executive Director will examine the progress of the program toward the achievement of the developed targets and benchmarks. Variances above or below the targets will be explained and recommendations prepared for corrective action. Program operations and budget decisions will be made by the Department Director and Executive Director to ensure the performance and budget remain on track. These reports and changes are then reported to the Board of Directors on a quarterly basis and used as an on-going assessment of project accomplishments and impact on the community. The above described monitoring tool provides a thorough and proactive method to ensure program operations are effectively carried out.

HRDC has a computerized accounting system and its fiscal department has a reputation for integrity and excellence.

In-kind records are maintained for all programs to determine the actual cost of agency operations.

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In-kind is recorded in the agency financial records on a monthly basis for those programs requiring a regular reporting of said information. In-kind information for all other programs is recorded at program year-end and at audit year-end.

HRDC will utilize a collaborative approach to identifying potential funding sources to ensure program sustainability. Utilizing participant outcomes, HRDC will develop a case for support to engage key stakeholders and identify potential stakeholders to create buy-in and opportunities for fundraising and program support at the local, state, and federal level. Potential opportunities for funding that will be explored include: The Microsoft Foundation, The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, New York Life Foundation Nurturing the Children Program, Surdna Foundation Nonprofit Sector Support Program, and the William Randolph Hearst Foundation Social Service Program. In lieu of identification of additional resources HRDC is committed to working with its partners to assure the continuation of this valuable program with or without outside financial support.

### **Organizational Capability**

The Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission, Inc. (HRDC), a nonprofit Community Action Agency, has operated human service programs in Allegany County, Maryland since 1965. As one of the original Community Action Agencies created under the Economic Opportunity Act, HRDC's mission is to eliminate social and economic barriers to promote individual and community stability through services, advocacy, and collaboration. HRDC also serves as Allegany County's Area Agency on Aging (AAA), as designated by the Allegany County Board of Commissioners.

As Allegany County's Community Action Agency and Area Agency on Aging, HRDC is the sponsoring agency for community programs geared towards empowering low-income individuals, seniors and families. Programs include: affordable housing; meals and activity centers for seniors; day care programs for disabled adults; support services and advocacy for seniors; energy conservation and

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home repair programs; job training; earned income tax credit assistance; Head Start; Early Head Start; energy assistance; Section 8 Housing Programs; Homeless and Emergency Shelter; Emergency Food; and Work Experience for TANF Recipients. In total, HRDC administers 30 programs supported by local, State, and Federal contracts to create an agency budget that exceeds \$11 million annually. HRDC's history reflects many benchmarks of achievement resulting from innovative programming, quality program management, and service delivery. It is one of only two Community Action Agencies in the state and one of only seven in the nation to be designated an Area Agency on Aging. Its Willow Valley Congregate Housing Project was the first of its kind in the county and the only facility in the state owned by a public housing authority that is devoted exclusively to sheltered housing. The Adult Medical Day Care Program was the first non-medical facility in Maryland to become licensed for Medicaid reimbursement and the Senior Nutrition Program began as one of only two pilot nutrition programs to gain funding in the state. A federally funded demonstration transportation program for disabled persons operated by HRDC led to the development of the AllTrans Program, now administered by the Allegany County Transit Authority, and the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) contracted with HRDC to use HRDC-developed software for automating other MEAP programs in the state. In 2002, HRDC was selected by the Annie E. Casey Foundation as one of twelve programs nationwide to become a pilot for the National Tax Assistance Program for Working Families, and in 2004 HRDC developed a Work Experience Program in partnership with the Allegany County Department of Social Services to place hard to employ Welfare to Work Participants. In 2009, HRDC was recognized by the State of Maryland in their inaugural round of Smart Sites for the development of a Gold LEED Certified Administrative Building and Cumberland Community Center and in 2010 HRDC became the largest Section 8 Housing Voucher Choice Program in Maryland outside of Baltimore City.

### Staffing

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The Key staff involved in this project will be HRDC's Executive Director (Courtney Thomas), Fiscal Director (Faron Garver), Area Agency on Agency Director (Renee Kniseley), and an RSVP Coordinator (Michael Cassidy). The Executive Director has over twelve years of experience in planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs; HRDC's Fiscal Director has over twenty years experience as an accountant and fiscal director. HRDC's Director of the Area Agency on Aging has over nine years of experience working with individuals sixty years of age and older. The RSVP Coordinator has over eight years experience volunteering with various organizations including World War II events. This extensive volunteer experience includes sitting on the Board of Directors for the Military Historical Preservation Association (MHPA), and is the President of the MD/PA/WV Chapter of the 5th Rangers Reenacting Unit, MHPA and has headed fundraising activities for several World War II Events. In addition to volunteering, he has worked with the public and people of all ages making him an ideal candidate to manage the program on a day to day basis. The RSVP Coordinator is responsible for the recruitment, training, and supervision of volunteers and partner agencies and provides direction, coordination, and consultation for all volunteer functions including special events.

### Financial Management

HRDC is subject to the regulations under Office of Management and Budget Circulars A-122, A-133 and A-110. An annual audit in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and Government Auditing Standards is performed annually by an independent auditor. Audits performed in the past fifteen years have concluded that the agency is capable of operating a variety of programs, from different sources, without questionable or disallowed costs.

HRDC utilizes a computerized accounting system and its fiscal department has a reputation for integrity and excellence. They use a fund accounting system designed specifically for grant management. The full accrual basis accounting system is maintained on secured local area network server. The hardware is very reliable, easy to use, and well maintained. The software is updated

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annually by the vendor, has an operator's manual, and the vendor provides unlimited technical support. All data is backed up daily and stored off-site.

With over 46 years of experience operating grants, HRDC has the necessary fiscal, contract and internal controls in place to successfully operate over 30 federal and State programs and contracts. HRDC is governed by an 18 member Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is made up of representatives from the private, public and low-income/elderly sectors of Allegany County. The Board is held with the responsibility to ensure that the organization meets the contract requirements. The organization's administrative oversight is provided by a full-time Executive Director with over 10 years of experience operating federal and State contracts. The fiscal function of the organization is managed by a full-time Finance Officer and supported by three additional full-time staff. The Finance Officer has over 20 years of experience in his capacity. Internal controls are outlined in a Finance Procedures manual. Not only is HRDC required to have tight fiscal control, the organization firmly believes in separation of duties to protect itself and its employees.

### Track Record

HRDC's Area Agency on Aging administers the Older Americans Act Programs in Allegany County. The HRDC operates four (4) senior centers which provide nutrition and nutrition analysis for both congregate and home-delivered meal participants for a donation. Likewise, transportation to and from each of the four senior centers is provided Monday through Friday. The OAA Program plays a direct or indirect role in the provision of over 123,000 meals per year, for congregate, home delivered, and HRDC's operated Adult Medical Day Service centers. Our Senior Centers also serve as the focal points for mature adults to participate in civic, cultural, social, educational, and recreational activities. HRDC has an extensive track record screening, placing, and managing volunteers. Volunteers play a substantial role in the Head Start/Early Head Start programs, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, Adult Medical Day Care programs, and in the senior centers. In the summer of

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2011, HRDC hosted 200 youth volunteers for a week through Group Workcamps that assisted ninety low-income households with repairs to their homes.

### Adequate Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies

HRDC will utilize its new administrative office located at 125 Virginia Avenue in Cumberland, MD for the programs' principal office. The administrative offices are handicap accessible and have a computer lab and several conference rooms available for program training, meetings, and activities.

Acknowledging transportation and geographic barriers HRDC will also utilize other HRDC-operated satellite locations in Frostburg, Lonaconing, and Westernport to provide program training and offer meetings and activities.

The contracts administered by HRDC also provide additional resources for the RSVP Program. Due to the rural nature of Allegany County, coordination and cooperation is essential and HRDC has coordinated with and been provided support by numerous agencies throughout the State of Maryland. HRDC works closely with the Allegany Department of Social Services (ACSS), Allegany County Board of Education (BOE), family service providers, local housing authorities, Allegany College of Maryland, Frostburg State University, the Western Maryland Health System, the Local Management Board of Allegany County (LMB); the Western Maryland Small Business Development Center; local banks and local units of government. HRDC's existing partnerships will enhance and increase the opportunities for RSVP volunteer placements. Needed equipment and supplies will be provided by HRDC and its partners.

### Purchasing Procedures

HRDC is governed by two federal standards when making purchases. The first guide is the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations," which discusses allowable and non-allowable costs. The second guide is the OMB Circular A-110, "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education,

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Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations," which establishes uniform administrative requirements for grants and awards.

HRDC has a Personnel Policies and Procedures (P&P) Manual that summarizes the benefits, policies, procedures and work rules of the HRDC. A full copy of the P&P can be made available for review.

### Evaluation Procedures

Administration and oversight of the RSVP is consistent with the mission of the HRDC and will enhance HRDC's ability to meet the long-term goals and objectives of the agency and its community partners. As a Community Action Agency, HRDC is required to comply with the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) requirements of the Community Services Block Grant. ROMA is an approach in which to develop outcome-based management strategies that assists in building accountability in the operations of the organization. It provides a means in which the organization can continually evaluate the effectiveness of each program and develop strategies for improvements in performance.

In addition to ROMA, HRDC analyses the performance and progress of each program on a quarterly basis. Prior to the beginning of a program year, program staff develops goals based upon the requirements of contract and the needs of the community. At the end of each program quarter, HRDC management reviews the progress of individual programs toward the achievement of performance targets and benchmarks. Variances of the targets are reviewed and recommendations for corrective action (if necessary) are created. Reports are prepared by Department / Program Directors in a specified format are presented to the Executive Director at quarterly meetings. Also included in the examination of program accomplishments is a budget analysis prepared by the Finance Department explaining where each program budget is by line item compared to the most current budget projections. At these meetings, based on information provided, program operations and budget decisions are made by the Department Directors and Executive Director to ensure program operations

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and budgets remain on track.

HRDC's Board of Directors is provided progress reports for each quarter based upon these program progress reports. HRDC has met or exceed their performance goals set for every program within the past five years.

### **Other**

Not Applicable

### **PNS Amendment (if applicable)**

Not Applicable