

Narratives

Executive Summary

An estimated 462 RSVP volunteers will serve in Waukesha County, Wisconsin. They will tutor children at public schools, help individuals with disabilities including veterans by providing transportation and food delivery, and serve at thrift stores and local schools through a network of 35 stations such as School District of Waukesha County, The Caring Place's Meals on Wheels Programs Safe Babies Healthy Families Learn to Earn store, Food Pantry of Waukesha County, Salvation Army, and the Aging and Disability Center of Waukesha County. The primary focus area of this project is Education. At the end of the three-year grant, 313 students will have increased academic performance in literacy and/or math, 105 individuals with disabilities will report having increased social support, and 7 nonprofits will have assistance with identified community priorities. The CNCS federal investment of \$81,700 will be supplemented by \$35,048.

Strengthening Communities

RSVP of Waukesha County (RSVP), incumbent program since 1981, is sponsored by Interfaith Senior Programs, Inc. (Interfaith) a faith-based, private nonprofit agency whose mission is to help older adults, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers live dignified, meaningful, and engaged lives in the community while maintaining their independence for as long as possible. Interfaith maintains partnerships with area faith communities for community outreach, volunteer recruitment, and financial support but per Board policy no religious witnessing is allowed. RSVP serves all of Waukesha County, which is located in southeastern Wisconsin, directly west of Milwaukee County, and is a mix of 27 urban and rural municipalities. Waukesha County has the state's second largest population of seniors age 60 years and older making it an ideal county for RSVP volunteer recruitment.

Waukesha County also has a growing percentage of school-age children living at or below poverty. According to the 2012 KidsCount report produced by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 7.2%, or 6,624 of the county's children live at or below poverty, a percentage that has risen from 4.3% and 3,846 children in 2005. Research from The National Assessment of Educational Progress summarizes the impact of this trend: "According to a two-year study conducted in the early 1990s the factors having the greatest impact on student performance were minority status, poverty status, (as measured by both free and reduced price lunch and Title I eligibility) absenteeism, parental education, and resources as measured by local spending."

"Children raised in poverty rarely choose to behave differently, but they are faced daily with

Narratives

overwhelming challenges that affluent children never have to confront, and their brains have adapted to suboptimal conditions in ways that undermine good school performance. In many poor households, parental education is substandard, time is short, and warm emotions are at a premium-- all factors that put the attunement process at risk "(Feldman & Eidelman, 2009; Kearney, 1997; Segawa, 2008). Unfortunately, children won't get the model for how to develop proper emotions or respond appropriately to others from watching cartoons; they need warm, person-to-person interactions. The failure to form positive relationships with peers inflicts long-term socio-emotional consequences"(Szewczyk-Sokolowski et al., 2005).

The RSVP Sponsor agency leadership in partnership with administrators from four Waukesha County school districts has determined that the growing number of school-aged children living in poverty has led to an unmet need for assisting students with reading, math, and modeling positive relationships. Review of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction school report cards points to specific schools within the four districts that have high percentages of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch and low percentages of students meeting basic requirements for literacy. School District of Waukesha Superintendent Todd Gray commented "We value the life experience of RSVP volunteers and are grateful for their willingness to share their time with our students. Our district would not be able to run this program ourselves, due to financial constraints. RSVP volunteers make a real, measurable difference for our district's neediest students and we are committed to making the partnership work. "

RSVP of Waukesha County has identified the Primary Focus Area of Education as a response to this critical community need. RSVP volunteers will be placed at four Waukesha County school districts that have the highest levels of unmet needs in academic achievement, specifically children with literacy needs, living at or below 185% poverty, and/or with special needs related to disabilities, as identified through standardized testing, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction statistics, and district administrators. The four identified school districts report that up to 39% of all students district-wide qualify for free or reduced lunch, according to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), with individual schools reporting as high as 84% of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Those districts and the Free/Reduced Lunch participation as reported through the DPI website are: School District of Waukesha with 39% (4,578 of 11,749), Menomonee Falls School District with 18.3% (745 of 4,074), Hamilton School District with 14.3% (621 of 4,357) and Pewaukee School District with 13% (315 of 2,510). The four identified school districts indicate that without continued RSVP involvement they are unable to meet all the needs of this portion of the student population,

Narratives

likely resulting in continued poverty for these students as they become adults. School District of Waukesha, for example, has seen a decrease of 3% in high school graduation rates, resulting in young adults who are unable to support themselves.

RSVP will place volunteers at the specific schools within each district that have the highest percentage of Free/Reduced lunch eligible students, and where district administrators identify a high percentage of students with literacy needs as measured through standardized tests. For example, School District of Waukesha has five elementary schools with between 33% and 84% of the student population qualifying for free or reduced lunch where RSVP volunteers will be placed. The same district has 2 elementary schools with far lower rates -- 13% - 16% qualifying students and DPI report cards that indicate 80% of students test at or above benchmarks for literacy in standardized tests. This wide disparity of income is also present within the other three identified districts, resulting in a significant number of students who arrive at a school already at a marked disadvantage simply due to their family's socioeconomic status. By focusing placement of RSVP volunteers within the identified schools we will serve those students who are most at risk, and expand the number of students who receive assistance as we recruit more volunteers.

RSVP program staff, three fulltime staff and one parttime staff, provides the infrastructure to support service activities that address the community need of Education. Two fulltime RSVP Coordinators work directly with the four school districts to support the Education service activities. The Coordinators spend approximately 50% of their time with school personnel to identify needs for volunteers and to support current volunteer placements. Coordinators attend faculty meetings when invited, meet individually with reading specialists and principals, and interact with classroom teachers to increase their profile in each school. Coordinators are responsible for introducing new RSVP volunteers to classroom teachers and monitoring the initial activities to ensure a smooth placement.

Coordinators assemble RSVP volunteers for back to school orientation and specific training, with the academic activity training designed and provided by the educators. Day to day activities of the Coordinators include management of volunteer timesheets and managing any problems such as open placements due to a volunteer's illness or travel schedule. Volunteer training effectiveness is measured through online surveys of classroom teachers utilizing a five-point Likert scale to determine if RSVP volunteers are provided sufficient and appropriate training to effectively assist with student literacy activities. Survey results are analyzed by program staff and shared with district administrators.

Coordinators are also responsible for day to day acknowledgement and recognition of RSVP volunteers' efforts as well as supporting schools' formal recognition activities and helping schools to

Narratives

develop recognition events. The most effective events involve communicating outcome results to the RSVP volunteers through data statements of students' academic achievements combined with simple thank you notes and pictures from the students. Coordinators encourage district superintendents to personally attend and recognize the volunteers for their efforts.

The remaining 50% of the Coordinators' time is spent in the community, recruiting new RSVP volunteers to respond to the needs in the districts. This is best done with information about specific needs within schools. For example, describing "a third-grade student who reads at a kindergarten level and needs help with picture books and flash cards on Tuesday mornings" will interest a volunteer more than a simple statement: "RSVP volunteers needed -- call for more information. "

Coordinators are charged with finding creative recruitment partners such as a local Chamber of Commerce that helps to identify businesses with employees age 55+ who will commit to help in a lunch-hour or after-school program. A Waukesha senior housing complex, Capri Communities, has committed to a new program to help their residents stay mentally alert and connected to the larger community. Residents will be recruited to serve as RSVP education volunteers assisting in the School District of Waukesha. The housing complex will provide recruitment fairs, transportation to the schools for volunteer service, and assist with recognition activities.

Specific RSVP volunteer service activities are defined by each school's intervention specialists, principals, and classroom educators to specifically address academic needs. For example, the Measures of Academic Proficiency and Progress test (MAP test) will identify specific academic deficiencies to be addressed, including 108 separate items addressing critical thinking, reading, writing, and math. Educators will match an RSVP service activity with a student's deficiency, and measure the progress of that same item in a post-test later in the school year against benchmarks for achievement.

For example, RSVP volunteers will serve as tutors, - listening to students read, modeling reading, reinforcing correct phonics, and helping students with flash cards of letters to address deficiencies in phonics, comprehension, and vocabulary. All service activities will align with evidence-based practices such as those outlined in the National Reading Panel's Report - Teaching Children to Read (2000). The report identified three key areas of emphasis: Alphabets, Fluency, and Comprehension.

Reading specialists will develop specific activities and approaches that are aligned with the areas of emphasis that are proven to impact a student's literacy achievement, yet are easy enough for a volunteer tutor to understand. Activities are also designed to be interesting for students rather than viewed as another intervention or a test. For example, the lunch hour Reader's Café includes

Narratives

transforming a school library with cheerful tablecloths, flameless candles, and special seating cards. Identified students feel welcomed and happy to participate. They informally interact with RSVP volunteers during eating of their lunch and then participate in specific literacy support activities with those volunteers. Standardized tests administered by district personnel twice during the school year measure the impact of the activities, demonstrating that the activities directly assist a student in his academic gains.

Scott Walter, Principal at Riverside Elementary School in Menomonee Falls District, describes how the RSVP service activities address academic deficiencies and help to demonstrate outcomes:

"Riverside Elementary has a long partnership with the RSVP program. We are an elementary school that is comprised of 33% minority students and 34% of our students are on either free or reduced lunch. RSVP continues to fill a need created due to our diverse population and also cuts to instructional support services that we have seen over the last few years. In looking at both our MAPP reading assessments and our classroom running record assessments, the number of students that were below proficiency decreased from 22% to 15% at the end of the (previous) year. We also had 84% of our students meet their projected growth targets on the Math MAPP assessment. Gains such as these continue to be made with the support of senior tutors volunteering during the day during our reading workshop time to talk about books with students, read to students, or have students read to them. In math, it is not uncommon to see our senior tutors playing math games with students or working with a small group on a skill. The after school RSVP program continues to be refined to allow high school students to focus on specific needs that students have."

RSVP of Waukesha County is committed to the Primary Focus Area Education, including recruiting, orienting, and placing 340 RSVP volunteers to provide evidence-based service activities within the four identified school districts. The four districts has each committed through a Memorandum of Understanding to a continued partnership that includes adherence to all federal grant regulations and assistance with measurement of Performance Measure ED2, the number of students that completed participation in CNCS-supported K-12 education programs and ED5, the number of students with improved academic performance in literacy and/or math. We believe that the service activities will directly and positively impact students' academic achievement and address our community's challenges that arrive from a growing percentage of children living at or below poverty. We will develop dosages required for measurement of ED5 with school district personnel and maintain appropriate data collection to effectively demonstrate the result of the RSVP volunteers' service activities.

Narratives

Although RSVP of Waukesha County has not chosen Services to Veterans as the Primary Focus Area, we are committed to serving veterans as RSVP volunteers in our program, including through Education placements, Other Focus Area activities with Healthier Futures, and activities within the Community Priorities areas. According to the 2010 census, Waukesha County's population includes 27,646 veterans (6% of the county's population of 431,479). Veterans are served by RSVP through volunteer opportunities including service activities in the Primary Focus Area, assisting those students who are members of military families. Program design within the Primary Focus Area includes identifying RSVP volunteers who are veterans during recognition events, special veterans service days at the schools, and encouraging veterans who feel comfortable sharing their memories to present stories of their time in the military to groups of students. Not every veteran who serves as a volunteer is comfortable with this type of service, however, so RSVP Coordinators screen for veterans on the volunteer application and communicate individually with veterans prior to placement in a service activity that may be uncomfortable for them. Veterans who are comfortable sharing their stories play an integral role as RSVP volunteers in intergenerational activities through Folk Art Fairs. During History Class sessions at a local high school, veterans meet regularly with small groups of high school freshmen, describing their experiences serving our country, and assisting the teenage students in better understanding their life experiences during our country's wars.

Veterans also help other veterans in the Other Focus Area of Healthy Futures, providing companionship, transportation, and food delivery for older veterans. Matching an RSVP volunteer who is a veteran with an older veteran, especially within the same general age range, can help both the volunteer and the older veteran to find camaraderie and purpose.

Recruitment and Development

RSVP volunteers are recruited through listings in the following: local congregation bulletins, online and print newspapers, VolunteerMatch, Volunteer Center websites, school district newsletters. We also collaborate with community partners for recruitment. For example, School Districts provide information about RSVP volunteer opportunities to retired teachers, resulting in retirees and often their spouses becoming volunteers at school stations. Satisfied RSVP volunteers provide the highest level of recruitment -- telling friends, service club members, fellow exercise class participants, church group members, and family members about their assignments and encouraging them to become volunteers. RSVP volunteers serve at community outreach fairs and give presentations to service clubs and congregation groups to recruit new RSVP volunteers. Sponsor staff track referral sources through a simple check box on each volunteer application and review statistics quarterly to determine

Narratives

successful recruitment activities. In many cases, the description of a specific RSVP volunteer assignment serves as the best recruitment method -- prospective volunteers read of the need for area students to increase academic achievement, for example, and feel compelled to meet that need. The RSVP Director and RSVP Volunteer Coordinators develop volunteer assignments with stations to offer a variety of activities for RSVP volunteers, offering maximum flexibility in schedules, locations, and types of outcomes being achieved within the CNCS National Performance Areas. We create high quality volunteer assignments specifically to help RSVP volunteers develop leadership. These assignments include assisting with recruitment of volunteers at community outreach fairs and speaking engagements at service clubs, facilitating orientations and trainings for new RSVP volunteers, mentoring new RSVP volunteers within a station, assisting in writing position descriptions for RSVP assignments, and leading or assisting RSVP program staff in development of outcome measurement tools and procedures. These assignments help volunteers to assume leadership, develop confidence and to improve themselves and their community. RSVP volunteers also lead or serve on the RSVP Community Advisory Group, lead or assist with SeniorCorps Week activities, conduct onsite station visits and create reports for the sponsor Board of Directors. The sponsor agency's annual Fabulous Fish Fry, which serves as a signature event for RSVP raising a portion of the required non-federal revenue match, also provides high quality volunteer assignments including serving as event chair, event committee members, selling tickets to the event, and volunteering at the event. We measure the success of assignments through volunteer and station satisfaction surveys. Results from surveys will be reviewed by program staff and the RSVP Community Advisory Group to ensure that assignments are helping to develop leadership and we create adjustments as indicated by the survey results.

Developing meaningful, high quality RSVP opportunities is the first step in ensuring that volunteers are effective. Providing orientation and training is the next step in ensuring that the volunteers will be effective in their assignments. The RSVP Director provides a volunteer handbook for all new RSVP volunteers and conducts an in-person orientation. Topics include prohibited activities, types of service activities available through RSVP, and an opportunity to discuss each volunteer's goals for service through RSVP. Once they have been matched to an opportunity, all RSVP volunteers are provided with basic information such as position descriptions, transportation information and assistance, station parking information, and maps and directions to help prepare for their assignments. RSVP volunteers placed at Primary Focus Area stations receive training developed by math and reading specialists. The training includes the types of activities that the volunteers will be asked to do, specific

Narratives

strategies for reading and math, ways to interact with students, and information specific to each school such as locations of bathrooms and break rooms. We plan to develop an additional annual training curriculum to introduce RSVP volunteers to technology being used in schools such as SmartBoards and NetBooks. The goal of this training is to increase the volunteers' understanding of technology as one tool used in education.

RSVP volunteers placed at Healthy Futures stations receive assignment-specific training from the volunteer manager at the station. For example, RSVP volunteers providing transportation assistance through the Faith in Action Program receive training related to driver sensitivity, use of handicapped permits for cars, emergency procedures, and tips for communication with individuals with age-related disabilities.

Our RSVP Director gauges effectiveness of trainings by checking in by phone or email with RSVP volunteers on a set schedule, including within 14 days after the volunteer's first placement, then at set points of 60 and 120 days. We include questions in satisfaction surveys such as "did you receive sufficient training for your current assignment?" and "Have you been provided with sufficient information about your station?" Results of these check-ins are documented and reviewed by program staff and the RSVP Community Advisory Group to determine needed changes for training curriculum.

We are committed to developing and maintaining a diverse RSVP volunteer pool that reflects Waukesha County's demographics, which according to the 2010 census, is White Non-Hispanic(90.6%), Hispanic or Latino (4.1%), Asian(2.7%) and Black Non-Hispanic Alone (1.2%). The sponsor agency's commitment to diversity begins with our Board of Directors' diversity statement included in our corporate bylaws, and applies to all agency activities, including volunteer recruitment and placement. Recruitment of RSVP volunteers from diverse pools includes a continuing relationship with the Hispanic Community Health Center to identify individuals for RSVP volunteer opportunities, and partnerships with area faith communities that serve the Hispanic Community. Volunteer recruitment is a portion of every sponsor agency employee's responsibility, and is overseen by the sponsor Executive Director, with specific activities carried out by the Community Outreach Coordinator and Director of Development and Marketing.

Veterans and military families will be recruited to become RSVP volunteers from area congregations, senior groups, Veterans of Foreign Wars clubs, and from newspaper listings and Volunteer Center websites. We have partnered with EasterSeals of Southeastern Wisconsin to develop placements at their Waukesha DryHootch Center, a no-alcohol resource center for veterans and active military

Narratives

personnel, where RSVP volunteers will provide peer mentoring and assist with connecting veterans and active military personnel to community resources. Veterans are also recruited to assist older veterans with transportation, companionship and food delivery through the four Healthy Futures stations.

RSVP volunteers with disabilities, including individuals with age-related disabilities, are encouraged to participate in less physically demanding assignments such as tutoring in schools, and as Pen Pals for low-income students and students with academic needs. Program staff members are experienced in assessing a volunteer's abilities and matching their abilities to service activities, and stations that are able to provide appropriate support. The RSVP Director is responsible for assisting stations in preparing for volunteers with disabilities, including accessible parking and volunteer work environments, sufficient opportunities for breaks, sufficient training, and compassion for volunteers. Some activities can be done at the volunteer's home, such as serving as a pen pal or providing telephone companionship for homebound individuals. RSVP staff also assist with coordination of accessible transportation for volunteers.

The RSVP Director oversees retention of RSVP volunteers through review of retention reports generated from the sponsor agency's program database outputs, including reasons for volunteer departures, looking for trends that should be addressed to increase retention. High levels of retention, defined as volunteers having a tenure of at least three years, can be linked to volunteers reporting a strong connection to their service activity. Satisfaction surveys are conducted annually of all RSVP volunteers to measure satisfaction and identify concerns to be addressed by staff.

Recognition of RSVP volunteers is conducted on both an informal, individual basis and in more formal, group events. The sponsor Board of Directors recognizes one RSVP volunteer at each board meeting through an in-person recognition of the volunteer, giving that volunteer an opportunity to describe their service and to hear from the agency's volunteer leadership that their service is appreciated. Program staff forward thank you cards to RSVP staff from recipients of service when it is appropriate. Program staff send thank you postcards to individual volunteers who have taken on additional or challenging assignments. Sponsor staff and RSVP program staff submit stories of outstanding RSVP volunteers to local media for publicizing in local newspapers and online periodicals.

More formal group recognition events are coordinated by RSVP Program Staff, including an annual all-volunteer celebration dinner held at a local partner congregation and an annual invitation-only dinner event to celebrate RSVP volunteers reaching milestones of 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 years of service and achieving the Presidential Lifetime Service Award. The Years of Service dinner is provided

Narratives

by a local assisted living complex as an in-kind donation.

Recognition at RSVP stations is an important part of the program, too. The RSVP Director communicates with station managers to ensure that volunteers are included in volunteer recognition events at the station. For example, RSVP station Hamilton School District recognizes RSVP volunteers at school board meetings and provide an in-kind donation of a recognition breakfast attended by 100 RSVP volunteers each year.

Examples of types of recognition articles and events are shared with RSVP stations as technical assistance. The annual RSVP volunteer satisfaction survey conducted by the sponsor agency includes a question to determine if volunteers feel appreciated at their station. This helps RSVP staff to be aware of examples of recognition that can be shared with other stations, and also helps to uncover any stations that are not providing sufficient recognition.

Program Management

Overall management of the RSVP project is the responsibility of the sponsor Executive Director (ED) with delegation of specific tasks made to the sponsor Associate Director and the RSVP Director. The three staff leaders meet monthly to review outputs of RSVP service activities, recruitment statistics, and to prepare for RSVP Community Advisory Group meetings.

The sponsor agency Executive Director (ED) is responsible for maintaining compliance of all agency contracts and grants, including RSVP. The ED receives and reviews updates from CNCS staff regarding changes in federal regulations, and attends CNCS sponsored educational sessions offered in person, online and through conference call opportunities to be updated on changes. The ED works with the RSVP Director to ensure that all RSVP volunteer stations are in compliance with program regulations and applicable laws, including a current, signed Memorandum of Understanding and current and compliant accessibility reviews on file with the sponsor agency. The agency's database system has the ability to store reminders for M of U updates to be in compliance with the every 3 year requirement. The RSVP Director visits each station at least annually to observe RSVP activities and ensure that prohibited activities such as conducting voter registration drives or leading religious services are not being conducted. Quarterly eNewsletters to RSVP stations include reminders about prohibited activities.

Infrastructure used to support volunteer stations in the Primary Focus Area of Education includes two fulltime RSVP Program staff who work with the identified school districts. Program staff members present an annual orientation to principals, teachers, and specialists involved with RSVP. The presentation includes a listing of prohibited activities including religious, sectarian, political, non-

Narratives

displacement of paid staff, advocacy activities that RSVP volunteers cannot be asked to do, and an explanation of non-discrimination of RSVP volunteers. Staff members also share portions of elder-sensitivity training, aiming to better prepare teachers for having a senior volunteer in their classroom. The training covers ideas such as how to introduce the RSVP volunteer to students (using Mrs. Smith versus Miss Mary) to model intergenerational respect. Throughout the school year the two staff members interact with school principals at least monthly to ensure that RSVP volunteers are adequately supported, for example having sufficient parking, appropriate supplies including adult-sized chairs, and welcoming RSVP volunteers within the schools. Program staff interacts with classroom teachers and specialists throughout the school year to evaluate the specific activities being done by RSVP volunteers, making sure that RSVP volunteers are not asked to do prohibited activities. Program staff also observes to ensure that the assignments are included in the activities needed to achieve the outcomes within the Primary Focus Area. Our communication plan with Primary Focus Area stations includes in-person visits, phone calls, and emails to support classroom teachers' confidence in the RSVP Coordinator's commitment to the school, allow for an available communication channel to discuss any challenges, and ensure that ongoing needs for students are able to be addressed through a placement of an RSVP volunteer.

Our plan to recruit and manage volunteer stations outside the Primary Focus Area begins with identification of the most pressing community needs by members of the RSVP Community Advisory Group, with their recommendation approved by the sponsor Board of Directors. Our Advisory Group has identified Healthy Futures, specifically increasing seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible, as an unmet community need outside the Primary Focus Area to be addressed by RSVP volunteers. This need was identified in the 2013 Community Health Improvement Planning Process led by the Waukesha County Public Health Department. The Advisory Group also notes that according to the 2010 Census, Waukesha County has Wisconsin's second largest population of seniors, including 27,646 veterans, and that many of those seniors and veterans have insufficient financial resources and are at risk of being unable to live independently. The Elder Index is compiled by Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW), a nonprofit organization that works to build pathways to economic security and equality of opportunity for women, families and elders, measures how much income a senior requires to meet his or her basic needs--without public or private assistance. The Elder Index measures basic expenses for seniors age 65+ living in the community. The Elder Index reports that to live independently in Waukesha County a single elder in poor health (two or more chronic health conditions) without a mortgage

Narratives

needs \$22,680 annually, \$24,228 if he rents a one-bedroom apartment, and \$32,640 if he has a home with a mortgage. According to the Social Security Administration, however, the average annual income for seniors is \$21,012, leaving many seniors in Waukesha County choosing between paying for transportation to healthcare appointments, rent or mortgage payments, food, medication, and expenses for basic needs.

The Advisory Group has identified four Stations that directly address this unmet need in Waukesha County, including the sponsor agency's Faith in Action Program that coordinates no-cost transportation and companionship services, The Caring Place' Meals on Wheels Program to provide prepared meals for homebound seniors, Food Pantry of Waukesha County's program to deliver boxes of food to homebound individuals, and the Aging and Disability Resource Center's programs to provide companionship and home delivered meals.

As a 30+ year incumbent RSVP, the sponsor agency's Board of Directors has devoted two retreats and a portion of the most recent strategic planning process to development of the graduation of both stations and volunteers. Thoughtful and responsible graduation of stations will be done in two ways - through a partnership with the local Volunteer Center to assist graduating stations in recruiting community volunteers, and transformation of RSVP volunteers into community volunteers to continue providing service directly to the graduating station. Stations that do not fit the changing community needs will be introduced to the Volunteer Center Director, a member of the RSVP Advisory Group, by the RSVP Director. We will facilitate communication for the stations to begin requesting volunteers of all ages from the Volunteer Center. Those RSVP volunteers placed at the graduating stations will be encouraged through phone conversations with the RSVP Director to continue providing service to the station as a community volunteer, and invited to continue as a RSVP volunteer at our Education and Healthy Futures stations.

We plan to transform an estimated 240 RSVP Pen Pal volunteers into community volunteers as part of three school districts' Pen Pal programs in classrooms that do not have low-income students or students identified with academic needs. The Pen Pal volunteers were originally recruited to participate in that specific activity, and approximately 95% have continued to provide service only as Pen Pals so we anticipate that there will be minimal disruption to them as they will continue with the same service activity with the same station. The 5% who also serve as tutors will remain RSVP volunteers and will be counted as unduplicated volunteers within the Primary Focus Area.

Approximately 25 current RSVP Volunteers placed at the Waukesha Recreation's Drop-in activities program will be encouraged to participate in the Primary Focus Area activities at nearby School

Narratives

District of Waukesha schools, specifically an after-school Community Learning Center led by the Recreation Department staff in partnership with Hawthorne Elementary School. These volunteers have traditionally participated in projects such as mailings and creating tray favors for home delivered meals with hours reported to RSVP. Those volunteers choosing not to serve at the schools will be able to continue their activities through the Recreation Department as community volunteers, and experience minimal disruption as their activities will continue and they will have the same Recreation Department staff as activity leaders. Those volunteers wishing to serve at the Community Learning Center will provide service activities within the Primary Focus Area.

Waukesha RSVP has worked in partnership with the four school districts included in the Primary Focus Area between five and fifteen years, measuring outputs through activity logs, and outcomes through surveys of classroom teachers. Each of the district's administrative leaders has expressed commitment to developing systems to share aggregated pre and post standardized testing information needed for RSVP to provide the relevant measurement data for all reports. Individual Principals at the schools have commented that they use standardized Running Records and MAP testing, so they are able to easily extrapolate measurement for students who receive assistance from RSVP volunteers. The fulltime RSVP program staff will work with the Principals and Reading specialists to understand the data, developing a schedule to review data twice each semester, at the beginning of the semester and at the end, corresponding to the dosage outlined in the Work Plans.

Healthy Futures outcomes have been measured by the sponsor agency since 2001, specifically analyzing dosages of services such as numbers of rides given, and measuring the increase in socialization and ability to remain independent through staff observation and client surveys. The RSVP Director will develop a schedule for measurement with the four Healthy Futures volunteer stations. The measurement schedule will include identifying the dosage required to meet the outcomes, and a system to measure changes in social contact as a result of interaction with RSVP volunteers. Measurement will be stored in spreadsheets and analyzed to allow for aggregate analysis of all four stations' data.

Project resources, including data for all output and outcome measurement, and all financial and in-kind resources, are overseen by the Associate Director, with monthly review by the Executive Director.

Data is housed in NewOrg, an on-line relational database system. Financial resources are accounted for within cost centers of the agency's accounting system. Operating costs such as office supplies and technology are monitored by the Associate Director for unusual increases and allowable expenses. Contracts for business insurance, technology support, and copy machine leases are bid on a set

Narratives

schedule to ensure competitive rates. We leverage project resources by building a strong administrative infrastructure that utilizes volunteer services to assist with clerical tasks, maximizing capacity for RSVP. Both community volunteers and no more than 5% of RSVP volunteers provide assistance with photocopying, filing, data entry, and other needed projects that do not displace existing staff. This approach results in minimal need for additional paid staff, and allows the existing paid staff to focus on both volunteer and station management. RSVP volunteers train new volunteers in data entry projects, leveraging resources to build leadership and increase capacity. The sponsor agency develops and utilizes technology as a tool for communication, data entry and analysis. For example, the telephone system can be configured to allow volunteer hotlines that are used for reporting hours at any time, and a volunteer portal available through the sponsor agency's website uses an email and password entry to allow RSVP volunteers to enter service hours, adjust their availability and volunteer interests, and sign up for assignments. Those RSVP volunteers without internet or choosing to speak with staff are able to contact staff using direct phone numbers during work hours.

Organizational Capability

The sponsor agency considers transparency and accountability to be core values for the organization, with both staff and volunteer leadership setting a standard for compliance in budgeting, financial management, accurate and true program data management, and availability of agency records. The agency has a whistle-blower policy in place that encourages reporting of fraud or waste with a guarantee of no retaliation.

Programmatic oversight of RSVP is the responsibility of the sponsor agency Associate Director, including review of monthly data output reports of RSVP service activities with the Executive Director and RSVP Director. Data reports are reviewed for accuracy in data entry, timely reporting of volunteer hours, compliance with requests for volunteer mileage reimbursement and other allowable expenses such as meals and travel, and ensuring that volunteers are not being asked to participate in prohibited activities. The RSVP Director is directly responsible for oversight of volunteer applications, background checks, volunteer orientations, RSVP Station Memorandum of Understanding renewals, management of current RSVP volunteers through regular communication, placement of RSVP volunteers in Community Priority assignments and Other National Performance Measurement areas, and recognition of RSVP volunteers. Regular review of reports and data inform the RSVP Director and Associate Director of areas of concern, such as a lack of compliance with RSVP volunteer expense requests that may lead to changes in internal policies and/or increased communication strategies. Monthly oversight of data and procedures ensures that reports prepared for funders are accurate and

Narratives

represent the full scope of RSVP volunteers' efforts.

The ED and Associate Director set an annual agency-wide schedule for outcome measurement of all programs, with RSVP outcomes measured according to school semesters in the Education Primary Focus Area. The RSVP Coordinators assigned to the Education stations work directly with principals and reading specialists to obtain data related to those students who work with RSVP volunteers according to the dosage set in the work plan. Aggregate pre and post data of standardized Running Records compiled by licensed teachers qualified to conduct the measurement is shared with RSVP Coordinators and used for reporting to funders. The RSVP Director measures outcomes, including annual volunteer satisfaction surveys, and measurement of the Healthy Futures outcomes with RSVP stations using pre and post surveys, electronic satisfaction surveys using SurveyMonkey, and activity reports of Community Priority activities.

Fiscal oversight is led by the agency's Associate Director. The agency's financial management system is an accrual basis accounting system and adheres to all generally accepted accounting practices. The Associate Director oversees budgets, payroll and expense reimbursement, bill paying, and bookkeeping, providing monthly reports to the Executive Director and Board Treasurer for review. All expense requests are reviewed for compliance with CNCS allowable expenses. Board-approved policies are in place for separation of day to day financial procedures to ensure adequate control of all processes, including a requirement that all checks are signed by both the Executive Director and a Board Director, daily logging in of all revenue by two staff members, daily deposits of all revenue, and timely donation acknowledgements. Bank accounts are reconciled by the Associate Director on a monthly basis and reviewed by the Board Treasurer. The Executive Director reviews all bank activity online including deposits and checks on a quarterly basis. The Associate Director prepares the biannual Federal Finance Reports, submitting them on time, and reconciling each Report to the agency's accounting records. The Executive Director and Associate Director review budgets and actual expenses to ensure that the required match is comprised of non-federal sources, and is accounted for accurately. Any in-kind used as part of the match is justified through an analysis of market value and adequate documentation of the value.

RSVP and community volunteers assist with day-to-day operational support and data collection at the direction of RSVP program staff. Volunteers perform 75% of all operational supportive data entry, with staff members auditing the data entry weekly to attain the highest possible accuracy. A board-approved policy is in place to allow for data collection (including RSVP volunteer hours reporting, volunteer applications, and mileage and expense reimbursement requests) through a variety of

Narratives

options, including the agency's online volunteer portal, telephone reporting, mailed reports, and faxed reports.

RSVP has a total of 2.5 FTE assigned program staff who report to the sponsor Associate Director. New RSVP staff members who will be in contact with vulnerable populations are required to pass a 3-part background check in compliance with federal regulations. Each staff member has a job description and an annual performance evaluation. Timesheets are completed after work is finished, meaning that a timesheet reflects actual work and time. The Fulltime RSVP Director position is sustained through allocation of federal funds. A Fulltime Volunteer Manager oversees Education Primary Focus Area Activities through the RSVP Seniors and Students program in the School District of Waukesha. This position is sustained through allocation of federal grant funds, state grant funds and matching funds including United Way allocations that have been awarded to the agency since 1996. A second fulltime RSVP Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for the Education Primary Focus Area Activities within the Menomonee Falls District and Hamilton School District. The position is sustained through allocation of federal funds, United Way allocations, and allocation of agency fundraising event revenue. A part-time RSVP Program Assistant is sustained through agency fundraising event revenue and community contributions.

The agency's Associate Director is a Certified Public Accountant with more than 11 years' experience in nonprofit accounting, including management of federal grant funds (CNCS, CDBG, HUD, ESG). The sponsor Executive Director has led the agency since 2001, overseeing growth of the organization from a \$200,000 budget to a \$740,000 budget, including management of federal, state, and county grant funds. The Executive Director and Associate Director review staff time sheets and activities to ensure compliance with all federal regulations, for example, ensuring that the RSVP Director is not using federally-supported or match-supported time for fundraising. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that all staff members understand what activities are prohibited, as outlined in federal regulations relevant to RSVP. These activities are detailed in the agency's Board-approved Personnel Policy Handbook that is reviewed and signed by every staff member.

The sponsor agency has coordinated volunteer programs since 1979, including management and measurement of the Primary Focus Area activity referred to as RSVP Seniors & Students since 1998. The sponsor has measured educators' observations of the service activities within the Primary Focus Area Education such as tutoring in reading and math using an electronic survey with questions that have a 5-point Likert Scale. The sponsor agency also manages a separate service program that involves coordination of 1,500 community volunteers annually to provide assistance to 1,200 seniors

Narratives

and adults with disabilities throughout Waukesha County. The sponsor agency is recognized in the Waukesha County community as the leading nonprofit organization for seniors, including placement in purposeful, high-impact volunteer opportunities, and compassionate services for those who are homebound and managing chronic health conditions. The agency's work has been acknowledged through 2004 and 2010 Nonprofit of the Year Awards from the County Executive and a 2009 Community Partner Award from the Hamilton School District.

The agency measures program performance through surveys, focus groups, and analysis of data reports. Measurement is documented on a dashboard report of graphs that is reviewed by program committees consisting of volunteers and staff members, comparing actual results to benchmarks that are set annually for each program. The Board of Directors reviews the program dashboard report at every board meeting. Annual data is reviewed by the Board of Directors and used in an Annual Report that is made available to the public and all funders.

The sponsor agency has developed sufficient capacity to assure that RSVP has adequate facilities, equipment, supplies and support by preparing annual and biennial plans for purchase of equipment. The agency strives to maintain cash reserves of at least four months at all times to manage cash flow fluctuations and be able to respond to urgent needs for equipment replacement. Securing in-kind and pro-bono services is a priority for the agency. For example, the organization has maintained a strong relationship with a local healthcare system since 1999, including in-kind donation of office space of 2,500 square feet located near public transportation. Technology support is provided by a local firm at a discounted rate, ensuring that technology networks are functional and backed up for all data systems that house program data.

Board-approved operation and financial management policies and procedures are in place, including advance approval of any expense. The Executive Director is responsible for management of personnel, including application of personnel policies that are reviewed every two years by the board of directors. All staff has job descriptions, and has an annual review with an immediate supervisor. The agency travel policy is applicable to all employees and includes adherence to IRS regulations of allowable expenses for mileage, monthly mileage reports reviewed by the employee's direct supervisor and sponsor agency Executive Director, with allowable reimbursement made through the payroll direct deposit process.

The agency ensures regular input from the community by coordinating an active RSVP Advisory Council with diverse representation. Membership is comprised of sponsor agency Board Directors, sponsor staff, RSVP Program staff, RSVP volunteers, RSVP station representatives, local Volunteer

Narratives

Center representation and representatives from senior-related organizations such as the county department of aging. The Council meets quarterly and is charged with conducting annual station visits and reports, reviewing RSVP program data such as volunteer retention and satisfaction, overseeing RSVP activities for SeniorCorps Week and MLK Day Celebrations, participating in RSVP Volunteer Recognition events, and making suggestions to the sponsor leadership and RSVP leadership for new stations and new volunteer service activities dictated by compelling community needs identified in local needs assessments. Council members are involved in fundraising activities and assist in promoting RSVP at community outreach fairs at senior centers and local congregations. Results of their meetings and station visits are reported to the sponsor Board of Directors.

The sponsor agency strives to have a robust financial management system, undergoing an annual audit by a CPA firm, including expense testing, rigorous review of all controls, contracts, payroll procedures, and financial processes. Both the annual audit and IRS Form 990 are reviewed by the agency's Finance Committee and full Board of Directors, and made available to the public on the agency's website and in hard copy as requested. The Finance Committee, comprised of Board directors and additional community volunteers, meets bimonthly to review financial statements, cash flow analysis, and discuss fluctuations in the budget representing more than \$1,000 or 10% of a line item.

The agency is committed to sustaining the non-federal share through an adequate fund development infrastructure that includes the sponsor Executive Director, Development Director, and Board Directors. The required share is comprised of United Way allocations requiring regular outcome measurement and reporting, soliciting local support from Rotary Clubs and other service groups, and coordinating fundraising events. For example, the agency's annual Fabulous Fish Fry, held since 1990, is attended by an average of 700 individuals. The Fish Fry and two other fundraising events generate revenue to meet the required non-federal share, and increase the local presence of RSVP in Waukesha County. In addition, all agency Board Directors provide personal contributions to the agency, setting the standard for community donors to provide financial support.

Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A