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Executive Summary

An estimated 250 RSVP volunteers will serve in the 6-county service area known as Lake Region RSVP in North Dakota. The population served will include children, older adults, homebound individuals, at-risk families, veterans, and the economically disadvantaged. At least 50 host stations will partner with us to address local and regional needs.

The primary focus area will be Healthy Futures, and some of the activities will include food delivery, transportation, companionship, food collection, food distribution, and health education. At the end of the three-year grant, at least 300 individuals who are homebound OR older adults and individuals with disabilities receiving food, transportation or other services that allow them to live independently will report increased social ties/perceived social support.

The annual federal investment of \$42,519 will be supplemented by at least \$34,230 each year in non-federal resources. Current sponsor has elected not to apply for funding and recently contacted RSVP+ North Dakota to ask if we would apply for funding to add this service region to the six we already administer and unify the state under a single statewide sponsor. Although we didn't have much time to prepare this application, we are confident we will be good stewards in the Lake Region service area. We have met with the current sponsor, the local advisory council, and local funders to ensure ongoing support. Focus areas and service activities proposed in this application will align conceptually with those under development in the other six service regions, leaving options for addressing local needs as we come to understand them. RSVP+ North Dakota is scheduled for re-competition in 2015.

Strengthening Communities

Lake Region RSVP serves a six-county area between the North Central and Northeast areas of North Dakota, just under 7,000 square miles. This region, like the state at large, is graying faster than the national average, which puts pressure on area service providers to ensure older adults have options for remaining independent as long as possible. The region also includes two Native American reservations--Turtle Mountain in Rolette County and Spirit Lake in Benson County.

The area also continues to be affected by a land-locked lake that has more than quadrupled in size during the past 15 years. Hundreds of homes have either been relocated or destroyed, cattle herds have had to be sold due to grazing land claimed by rising water, vital tillable acres are under water,

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and roads continue to become overtopped by the lake. The situation is a disaster in slow motion that has created a serious financial burden for residents, continuous challenges organizing daily life in spite of mobility issues faced by everyone, including emergency services. The US government and state of North Dakota have spent over \$450 million to date in flood mitigation efforts, including moving roads, rail, power lines, and protective dikes. Not only is the largest city in the region (Devils Lake) at daily risk of a dike breach, smaller towns in the region are also threatened. The community of Churches Ferry in Ramsey County was relocated, and the town of Minnewaukan in Benson County is currently undergoing relocation of all its residents. Older adults often feel helpless under the relentless rising of the lake and the precarious nature of the miles of dikes containing water for years at a time.

Specific kinds of services are key for at-risk people in the region. Not only are there homebound individuals who need meals delivered, relocation often means displacement from the familiar, from friends, and from family members who used to check in on them periodically. Such folks often rely on volunteers for their meals and for the social connection and sense of companionship provided when someone checks in on them regularly. Many who used to drive are no longer able to navigate the ever-present detours, poor road quality, and even dangerous driving conditions when winds push the water over roadways with enough force to cause vehicles to hydroplane off the surface of the road. They now rely on transit and volunteer transportation. Residents of the rural areas are finding it more and more difficult to find ways of accessing basic need, including health care at the only facility of any size in the region, which is in Devils Lake where the growing lake is a daily challenge.

The entire service region has a population of only 41,641, roughly the size of a small suburb near any major city in America, but spread out over nearly 7,000 square miles. Measuring how individuals at risk perceive social benefit from food delivery, transportation, and companionship given their daily challenges and the distances between them is a meaningful outcome. We know that social support is particularly needed by those without close neighbors, without quick and easy access to food, without means to reach out to others. In rural areas, isolation can be devastating and even life threatening.

As a sponsor of six service regions in the state, we have experience working with agencies who respond to such needs every day. One of our partners mobilized a transportation solution for veterans to access care at the only Veteran's Hospital in the state in Fargo. A van driven by a volunteer driver begins picking up veterans in the early hours one day a week, starting in the western part of the state

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and driving east. The trip is more than 300 miles from west to east, and veterans are picked up in small communities along the way, including those in the Lake Region service area. Once the van reaches Fargo, the veterans are assisted with their medical appointments the remainder of that day and the next, and then they are returned to their homes in reverse order. Only a small group of veterans can be transported each week, but for the veterans involved, the service is a lifeline to the help they need and to which they are entitled.

Specific demographic information about the six-county area:

BENSON COUNTY (1388.71 square miles) has a total population of 6723 with the 65+ age group comprising 12.6% of the population. Ethnic population is represented by 44.3% Caucasian, 0.1% Black or African American, 53.8% Native American, and 1.8% other. The percentage of low-income households is 36.3%. The average household size is 2.88. Fort Totten is the largest town with a population of 1243, and the 55+ age group is 273 or 22% of the total. The pastor of the Dakotah Oyate Lutheran Church has become a partner with RSVP, beginning with providing training/information sessions for volunteer mentors and others. Through him, other tribal agencies have made contact with RSVP. Progress continues to be slow, but even slow progress is better than no progress.

CAVALIER COUNTY (1488 square miles) has a total population of 3939 with the 65+ age group comprising 25.7% of the population. Ethnic population is represented by 97.8% Caucasian, 0.3% Black or African American, 1% Native American, 0.2% Asian, and 0.7% other. The percentage of low-income households is 7.7%. The average household size is 2.34. Langdon is the largest town with a population of 1878, and the 55+ age group is 657 or 35% of the total.

NELSON COUNTY (982 square miles) has a total population of 3057 with the 65+ age group comprising 27% of the population. Ethnic population is represented by 97% Caucasian, 0.3% Black or African American, 1.1% Native American, and 1.6% other. The percentage of low-income households is 7.9%. The average household size is 2.08. Lakota is the largest town with a population of 781, and the 55+ age group is 305 or 39% of the total.

RAMSEY COUNTY (1185 square miles) has a total population of 11,452 with the 65+ age group comprising 18% of the population. Ethnic population is represented by 88% Caucasian, 0.4% Black or African American, 8.4% Native American, 0.5% Asian, and 2.7% other. The percentage of low-

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income households is 11.4%. The average household size is 2.27. Devils Lake is the largest city in the service region with a population of 7141, and the 55+ age group is 1928 or 27% of the total. Devils Lake is located within seven miles of the Spirit Lake Nation. A majority of Ramsey County's 8.4% Native American population reside in Devils Lake. Cooperative efforts with the Spirit Lake Nation benefit everyone. RSVP is making positive steps in a relationship with programs and individuals of the Spirit Lake Nation.

ROLETTE COUNTY (902 square miles) has a total population of 14,206 with the 65+ age group comprising 10.2% of the population. Ethnic population is represented by 217.8% Caucasian, 0.4% Black or African American, 75% Native American, and 2.8% other. The percentage of low-income households is 36.7%. The average household size is 2.96. Belcourt is the largest town with a population of 2078, and the 55+ age group is 270 or 13% of the total.

TOWNER COUNTY (1025 square miles) has a total population of 2264 with the 65+ age group comprising 24% of the population. Ethnic population is represented by 96.2% Caucasian, 0.2% Black or African American, 2.6% Native American, and 1% other. The percentage of low-income households is 9.8%. The average household size is 2.23. Cando is the largest town with a population of 1115, and the 55+ age group is 371 or 33.25% of the total.

Recruitment and Development

RSVP+ North Dakota is sponsored by North Dakota State University as a major outreach initiative for the state. As a land grant, doctoral level research institution, we take seriously our statewide mission and comprehensive responsibility to the citizens throughout our state. Our host unit is the Division of Distance and Continuing Education, where we receive support in the form of marketing, technology, curriculum, and administration.

Recruitment starts with good partnerships, and we have over 500 active MOUs with agencies large and small across the state. Many years ago we consolidated our partnering process among the six service regions. Rather than signing multiple MOUs with local chapters or county-level agencies, we looked for the largest jurisdictional unit with authority to enter into a partnership with us. For example, we have a single MOU with the statewide office of Special Olympics, rather than six separate MOUs in each of our service regions. One of our staff members becomes the contact point for MOU renewal and relationship management. This allows us to have more meaningful

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conversations with our partners about utilization of volunteers and how their organizational culture contributes to successful recruitment, development, and retention. We would bring this approach to the Lake Region RSVP as well.

A few years ago we developed an online course called RSVP Leads, which seeks to help volunteer coordinators, or executive directors if the organization is small, to improve their ability to manage and develop volunteers. We have found this course useful in re-imagining organizational culture as it relates to volunteers, and it sparks helpful discussion about how to engineer meaningful roles for volunteers. We would bring such resources to Lake Region RSVP along with our experience in hosting Round Tables--periodic conversations with small groups of partner agency staff about topics such as generational differences among volunteers, writing interesting volunteer job descriptions, use of social media for recruitment, and the changing nature of recognition. We visit regularly with our host station staff about volunteer training and development issues, discussing when it might be better for us to lead the training/development and when it would be more effective for our partners to do so. Ultimately, we each have a responsibility to empower volunteers for success whether the issue at hand is driving veterans across the state or driving an 84-year old homebound woman to a local congregate meal site so she can occasionally dine with others and enjoy some social interaction.

The six-county Lake Region RSVP service area is mostly white (57%), significantly low income (24%), mostly small households (2.46 average), and older than most other places. The national average for population over 65 years of age is 13%; Lake Region (and North Dakota overall) is 17%. The largest minority group is Native Americans (37%, the rest are single digits). Major employers in the area include state government (ND School for the Deaf), Lake Region State College, US military, educational facilities, health care, tribal casino/resort, tribal manufacturing, and agriculture. Camp Grafton, a regional training facility for the military, brings many guard and reserve personnel to the area.

We reach out to potential volunteers through Volunteer Match, AARP's Create the Good, Facebook, and LinkedIn in addition to our own web presence, www.rsvpnd.org. The marketing team that branded our program won a national graphic art award last year for the scope of the marketing campaign (letterhead, business cards, posters, brochures, t-shirts, banners, table runners, and glassware--cups, mugs, water bottles).

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Because the best volunteer recruiter is a happy volunteer, we run referral contests among our volunteer pool. We have worked with our partners to create job titles for volunteers, in keeping with the tendencies and preferences of Baby Boomers to bring their professional skills to volunteering and their desire for a working title. We promote inter-generational volunteering, which appeals to the grandparents.

We facilitate volunteer mobility around the state, which is helpful for retention. Those who spend their vacations in other parts of the state can be facilitated by our team approach to staffing. And we'll work with staff in other states for those who travel south for the winter or have summer recreational homes elsewhere.

We're sensing a bit of boredom with the traditional luncheon or banquet as a recognition strategy, so we're exploring things like picnics, movie night at a local theatre, and sporting events as alternatives.

ASSURING A HIGH-QUALITY EXPERIENCE FOR VOLUNTEERS.

A year ago, we developed and tested an online certification course we call "RSVP Leads," which has two parts--volunteer management and volunteer leadership. The volunteer management half is designed to help host station staff become better supervisors of volunteers, helps them help their organizations envision the roles of volunteers differently, helps them create the kind of environment where volunteers can thrive and truly contribute to the success of the organization. By helping host station staff improve the conditions of the volunteers' experience, we believe we help deepen the meaning and enjoyment of volunteering. The volunteer leadership half of the course is designed to help volunteers who see themselves as leaders within organizations become more effective in their leadership roles. The course was designed and developed by our RSVP staff, led by a VISTA with a curriculum background. It was beta tested by a select group of advisory council members, host station staff, and other partners.

RSVP+ North Dakota also assures a high-quality experience for volunteers through:

--Developing service descriptions that capture the elements of quality volunteer service and leadership, including opportunities to (1) coordinate activities; (2) facilitate smooth operation and activities of other volunteers including scheduling and assignments; (3) suggest options and take initiative; (4) participate in development of the project and its activities; (5) provide hands-on support to the project,

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such as assisting in the Program office; and recruiting other volunteers and convening team meetings.

--Ensuring that volunteers receive orientation, training, in-service sessions, local workstation supervision, and an annual assessment opportunity.

--Ensuring that volunteers have opportunities to periodically meet to discuss their service, change volunteer assignments, problem-solve, and share ideas about how to make their Volunteer teams stronger and more effective.

--Developing strategies to reflect on their service experiences, such as service learning, to share their perspectives with project staff, advisory councils, stations, and other partners.

--Promoting volunteers into leadership positions (i.e. a volunteer has become our publications coordinator designing brochures and other documents used statewide, a volunteer leads our puppeteer team for anti-bullying presentations in elementary schools, volunteers are now leading focus groups in most of our service areas).

--Focusing on meaningful service in key areas such as mentoring, tutoring, and companionship.

--Analyzing Baby Boomers as a group, understanding the research its implications, and informing advisory councils and staff about their traits and characteristics as we envision operational changes needed to support Baby Boomers entering our programs.

--Providing additional opportunities for lifelong learning through our RSVP ConnectsU initiative.

--Promoting social media as a way for volunteers to connect to opportunities and each other.

--Implementing web-based reporting of hours as a convenience for the technology-savvy among the volunteer pool.

BUILDING A CORPS OF VOLUNTEERS, INCLUDING RECRUITING, RETAINING AND RECOGNIZING 250 SENIOR VOLUNTEERS SERVING NEARLY 30,000 HOURS AT OVER 50 STATIONS.

--Recruiting takes place via staff, VISTAs, and advisory/visioning council members speaking at volunteer station meetings, public events, senior functions, service clubs and other organizations, senior apartments, living centers and other residential areas. Newsletters are disseminated to churches, volunteer stations, and public officials and other organizations. Volunteer stations are asked to include RSVP articles in their newsletters. Information Booths are set up to distribute information to participants at various events such as health fairs, home shows, social awareness activities, and other major gatherings. National/state/local level media releases are utilized in these recruiting

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efforts.

--Volunteers, advisory council members, and station coordinators are encouraged to refer seniors to volunteer with the program.

--Activities featuring volunteerism are organized around national days of service (MLK Day and 9/11 Day of Remembrance) other service days/week such as National Volunteer Week and Make a Difference Day as well as AmeriCorps Week and Senior Corps Week.

--Local project staff members and VISTAs promote retention of volunteers by offering challenging volunteer opportunities and a supportive relationship with staff.

--Local projects recognize volunteers for their contribution by acknowledging their personal achievements and holding an annual recognition event which may include CNCS staff, ND State Commission members, local public leaders, elected state officials, US Congress delegation, and other notable individuals who are invited. If dignitaries cannot attend, they always send a letter of thanks and commendation; letters are placed on tables for the volunteers to read and take with them if they wish.

--Local advisory council members attend annual volunteer recognition events and hand out packets as volunteers arrive. VISTA members in the service area generally attend such functions as well. It should be noted that our RSVP volunteers tend to volunteer at multiple sites in multiple roles, which supports North Dakota's #5 ranking in senior volunteerism in the latest National Volunteering in America Survey compiled by CNCS. Some are active at as many as 5-6 different kinds of non-profit agencies; working with 2 or 3 is typical and routine. Only rarely do our volunteers serve one agency. Variety, therefore, seems a favorable outcome for our volunteers and we work hard to promote service variability to satisfy the need. When we call our volunteers on their birthdays, they are offered opportunities to expand their service with additional agencies or in new ways, and we anticipate this phenomenon will continue to grow as younger volunteers join our ranks with their access to web-based systems and information sources.

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WILL BE PROVIDED TO PROJECT STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, VOLUNTEER STATION SUPERVISORS, AND ADVISORY COUNCILS.

--The program ensures that all volunteers will receive the necessary orientation and training prior to starting their service by informing each new volunteer about the insurance benefits time sheet requirements, and a listing of the variety of volunteer opportunities available. A volunteer handbook and/or fact sheet is also given to each volunteer.

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--Volunteer station supervisors conduct on-site training for the volunteer pertinent to their assignment and responsibilities.

--Orientation and technical assistance are provided to the advisory/visioning councils by CNCS staff, grantee, local professionals (Aging Services, technology providers, mental health professionals, for example), and project staff. Council members also have access to an online learning space called Moodle where documents and other resources can be shared and a discussion forum is utilized to communicate among the groups.

--Volunteer station staff participate in trainings led by RSVP staff to assist them in developing effective job descriptions, in re-imagining volunteer roles within their organizations, in supervising volunteers of different generations, in managing conflict, etc. We utilize a Round Table format to bring station staff together for discussion and problem solving. The RSVP Leads certification course was born from the Round Table format.

Other T/A is provided as needed throughout the year.

A WORD ABOUT VETERANS AND/OR SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES.

In the same way that the Boomers are uniquely positioned to take on independent living as a social issue, they are also fully prepared to address the needs of military personnel--veterans and active duty along with their families. Many Boomers have experienced military service themselves or through their parents or children, and as this generation ages there appears to be increasing motivation to "take care of" our military families. We anticipate increased activity in this area during the coming year.

Program Management

Our relationships with volunteer host stations are time and labor intensive to both initiate and maintain. The relationship begins with discussion, questions and answers, exploration, and then moves to the MOU when the site is ready to manage volunteers. RSVP+ staff members review each aspect of the MOU with our station counterparts for clarity and understanding. We do offer an online course on volunteer management if the host station staff need to sharpen those skills. We try to visit host stations yearly on average, more often if we hear from volunteers or others that there may be concerns. When physical visits are impractical, we have several electronic means of communicating. In some cases, local Visioning Council [see below] members may visit host stations to help us monitor compliance issues. Experienced volunteers are also helpful for ensuring that stations are appropriately

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utilizing volunteers.

Volunteers receive birthday calls from our nearest regional office to update their contact information and to visit about their volunteering experience. We ask about how the host station is treating them on site, whether they like the service they are asked to provide, what comments they might have about their experience. This is a useful practice for learning more about what the volunteers are actually doing. We have this kind of conversation at other times as well if something comes in on a time sheet that needs clarification or if a volunteer calls us with questions or concerns. We also find out more details about their volunteer service when we feature them for various publications or in our reports.

Because we emphasize the relational nature of our work, we are well patched into the service sector networks. As community needs change, we generally know what is occurring based on regular communication with coalition members, host station partners, funders, and other community at-large entities. The United Ways have been in a transition process during recent years that has significant impact on our approach to seeking funding from them. The themes they are now focusing on are similar to the CNCS redesign, and our programming has adapted to this change in emphasis. We are a full-scale volunteer center, so shifting priorities can be absorbed by the depth and breadth of our volunteer base. At present, we have no plans to graduate volunteers or stations, we'll just need to fund the activity differently. Having an array of funders with various approaches to service is a serious challenge, but it affords us options that programs with a single funder or a small number of funders cannot manage.

In the 10 years we have been a sponsor of RSVP, we have worked with volunteers and host stations in all the areas identified under Healthy Futures in this grant application. While it is often difficult to garner cooperation related to information gathering, our partners do know we work under a federal mandate to measure performance.

Until two years ago, we had an advisory council functioning in each of our six service regions. As the program manager, I would travel the state every other month and attend all meetings of all councils. Then we decided to make a change. Using a technology called IVN (Interactive Video Network), we now have a single Visioning Council made up of two community members from each service region,

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all program staff, and VISTAs currently serving. The IVN network is a higher education apparatus, and we gather as small groups in classrooms in each service region to have a monthly conversation about RSVP+ North Dakota. This Visioning Council not only plans strategically for RSVP, but also for all the programming under the RSVP+ umbrella--Foster Grandparent Program, VISTA, volunteers under 55, and the various initiatives we have running such as VoiceBook that we mobilize for every national day of service. We still have local working groups or action committees to assist with local programming, marketing, and events. But the overarching unified vision for our organization is now vested in the Visioning Council.

Our state CNCS director and area manager have been guests when this group was in session. Using IVN technology, each site can see and hear all the other sites, and it is entirely doable to have thoughtful conversation in this format. Our Visioning Council members plan beyond RSVP and are asked to think in broad terms about all that we do, ensuring that we are in compliance based on all the rules that pertain to each facet of our organization. The benefit of this group seeing the bigger picture is beyond measure for the organization.

Organizational Capability

NDSU is a doctoral-level research institution with \$175 million in grants/contract funds annually. Oversight occurs in several ways. Our office of Sponsored Programs Administration reviews grant proposals and budgets before we are able to submit a grant application. If they allow the proposal to go forward and it is funded, an account is created in our financial management system that will then be monitored by the Grant and Contract Accounting office. Each grant is assigned to a specific staff person, who then works with me or anyone managing a grant or program. All grants reside in separate accounts. Grants with matching grants are tracked together. Staff in our program have limited roles in working with finances--accounts receivable are not handled by the same individual as accounts payable; all transactional activity is carried out by someone other than the one who approves it; expenses paid at the unit level and monitored by Grant and Contract Accounting are also reviewed by the University Accounting office. We have an internal auditor, and all institutional financial transactions are audited every other year by the State Auditor's office.

Program staff in the service regions (Directors, Specialists, and Coordinators) do not have regional budgets, nor do they handle finances. As Program Manager, I write all the grants and manage all the finances; I also do all the reporting. I have an Accounts Technician who initiates payment and works

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with all the oversight levels to ensure procedures are handled correctly. Contracts external to the university generated by our program are approved by the Director of Purchasing. Documents are reviewed either by General Counsel or contracted counsel. All staff use the state fleet for travel, which is significantly cheaper than reimbursing for personal vehicle use. State employees also receive discounted lodging at hotels around the state. We benefit from a number of university-based discounts on supplies and equipment. NDSU has an in-house print shop and document publishing unit. We also have access to site licenses for software and web portals. The purchasing power of the university has saved us significant amounts of money each year. We do not have slush funds or cash on hand; every type of financial transaction runs through some appropriate unit of the institution. We have policies and procedures that govern use of computers, safety, equity and diversity, access to those with disabilities, non-discrimination, grievance procedures, staff responsibility reviews annually, and so on. At any given time, RSVP+ North Dakota has 25-35 open grant lines (federal, federal match, excess, and funds unrelated to CNCS programming). Our fiscal activity is vigorous, under constant scrutiny, managed with multiple levels of oversight, segmented appropriately, reviewed regularly, and conforms to every standard of accounting required by a wide array of funders.

DESCRIBE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S EXPERIENCE IN THE PROPOSED PROGRAM AREA.

RSVP+ North Dakota is completing our tenth year of operating RSVP and VISTA grant-funded programs, and third year of managing FGP. During that time, two nationally competitive PNS grants were awarded in 2005 and 2006, another PNS in 2011, local/regional funding has increased even in a tight economy, volunteerism has increased, efficiency of program operations has increased, service areas have expanded, new performance measures have been developed, new initiatives have been undertaken, networks have been broadened, partnerships have been strengthened, and sustainability is a working objective in all endeavors. Outreach continues to be an important institutional principle, evidenced by a significant body of supporting programs. "Public service" and "mission values" are both implicit in the stated institutional mission and vision. As the land-grant campus in the state, NDSU has a long history of managing programs that have a significant impact on the state and region, particularly in areas of youth/family, leadership/community building, and interpersonal relations programming. RSVP/VISTA/FGP are cornerstones for developing and enhancing that outreach mission as well as a way of addressing the needs of an element in our society that is often ignored by many institutions of higher education, namely older adults. Advisory Council members, Visioning Council members, local focus group members, host station staff, volunteers, and other

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partners have been built into a powerful, cohesive alliance in support of service to communities.

IDENTIFY KEY STAFF POSITIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROGRAM MANAGEMENT, BACKGROUND, AND EXPERIENCE OF THESE STAFF MEMBERS AND/OR PLANS TO SELECT AND SUPPORT ADDITIONAL STAFF.

The Office of Sponsored Programs Administration, directed by Associate Vice President Valrey Kettner, reviews and authorizes all grant and contract applications for legal, financial, technological, research, and external constituency implications. NDSU submits no grants that have not been reviewed by her staff. The Office of Grant and Contract Accounting oversees all external funding, approves expenditures, and assembles financial report data. The Division of Distance and Continuing Education is an outreach unit in the business of providing education and training in many different areas across the state, nation, and beyond, as well as across the life span using a variety of delivery systems.

Grantee representative oversees operations of six regional RSVP service areas, representing 47 of 53 counties in North Dakota. As RSVP+ North Dakota Program Manager, Nancy Olson serves as team facilitator for program and staff development, financial management, and liaison to CSO. I have a BS in English Education, am in my 29th year at the university, and have numerous experiences managing grant projects, professional development outreach, and accreditation training.

Program Director Description: Responsible for managing the local RSVP, its staffing and resource development needs, stakeholder needs including grantee/grantor and advisory groups as well as volunteer stations, plus various public relations and volunteer recognition activities. Specific major tasks include performing all aspects of volunteer management, developing financial and asset-related resources, supervising paid and volunteer staff, provide formal recognition of volunteer efforts, and network with grantee/grantor and advisory groups. Given the size of our state, we have subdivided into service regions. Acquisition of Lake Region RSVP would likely mean following the same pattern we have in other areas of the state. In our smaller service areas, we staff with Program Specialist--a newly created layer of staffing in between Directors and Coordinators. Specialists are overseen by Directors in adjacent service areas; in this case, a local Specialist would be hired and oversight would come from RSVP+ Northeast ND (Grand Forks)-- Kurtis Shelton, BS in International Studies, History, Secondary Education, has coordinated an urban community volunteer center.

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Succession management with a staff as small as ours in a space as geographically large as ours is quite a stretch. Program Directors work together across service areas and, in our two largest programs, work with Program Coordinators within service areas. Insertion of Specialists into regions without a Director physically present has helped us operate more efficiently and cost effectively. And we've seen a higher level of continuity since the change. This is a step that will have some positive impact on succession management but with limited applicability given the size of the total area.

DESCRIBE YOUR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND PAST EXPERIENCE MANAGING FEDERAL GRANT FUNDS.

NDSU is a research/doctoral university with hundreds of grants operating at any given time, many of them federal. Financial management is based on best practices of accounting, including multiple layers of oversight and separation of functions. Indirect rates are federally negotiated by activity type, with 42% returned to the generating unit. The Office of Sponsored Programs Administration checks budgets before submission. Once funded, the Office of Grant and Contract Accounting enters the process flow and approves all grant expenditures. Offices of Human Resources, Payroll, Purchasing, Business, and Accounting handle specifically defined components of grant-related financial operations. At the unit level, accounts payable, accounts receivable, and payroll are all separate functions handled by different support staff. Financial process documents are also prepared by staff other than staff authorized to approve such transactions. Once approved at the unit level, Grant and Contract Accounting approval is secured before Accounting processes the transaction. The university is audited along with the other 10 campuses in the university system by the Office of the State Auditor. The 11 campuses in the North Dakota University System all participate in a single PeopleSoft database for financial, academic, and personnel records.

DISCUSS YOUR TRACK RECORD IN SUCCESSFULLY MANAGING VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS, INVOLVEMENT WITH SENIORS, AND IMPACT-BASED PROGRAMMING.

In the years managing RSVP programming around the state, best practices have been adopted and streamlined to build local successes. Programs have expanded geographically, quantitatively, qualitatively, and programmatically. Staff members have attended numerous in-service and formal training activities to improve skill in managing volunteers and designing impact/performance-based programming. Collaborations with other community organizations that manage volunteers have

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been forged, and ties to sibling programs (SCP, FGP, and AmeriCorps) have been strengthened. VISTA continues to be an important component in our strategic vision for RSVP sustainability. Our team of VISTAs provide much of the framework activity and design function for RSVP expansion, and they contribute significantly to the capacity-building efforts and new initiatives underway. Other areas of the campus such as Gerontology, Student Volunteer Services, Assessment and Institutional Analysis, Cooperative Extension Service, 4-H, and the State Data Center also have experience and available resources related to volunteer management, senior populations, and performance programming. As an institution within the North Dakota University System, NDSU is governed by the State Board for Higher Education. Because we are a function of state government and not a 501(c)(3), we have no Board of Directors.

DESCRIBE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S CAPACITY TO ASSURE THE PROJECT HAS ADEQUATE FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, SUPPLIES, PURCHASING PROCEDURES, AND PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT SUPPORT, INCLUDING CLEARLY DEFINED ROLES FOR STAFF AND ADMINISTRATORS.

Operating processes for the items listed above are governed by policies and procedures at the campus level in concert with the North Dakota University System and the North Dakota Century Code. The adequacy of facilities, equipment, and supplies will in large measure depend upon the success of the grantee representative and program directors to elicit appropriate levels of funding. In most cases, facilities on the various campuses across the state are not appropriate spaces for programs such as RSVP; in fact, off campus space is more desirable because parking shortages create access difficulties for the senior population. Networking infrastructure for communications and connectivity to the internet can be provided at a variety of locations off campus, and working models are in place. The university has central systems for risk management and property insurance, inventory control and purchasing procedures including service contracts, human resources management for hiring practices and staff development. A Staff Senate exists to provide advice and consent on matters concerning staff recruitment, retention, development, and review. An annual responsibility review process is in place for supervisors and staff to analyze together past performance, appropriateness of work expectations, and goals for the future. The availability of video conferencing as a communication tool will allow remote interactive discussion on a regular basis to share successes and concerns among RSVP staff, volunteers, Advisory Council members, Visioning Council members, or other ad hoc groups as needed. Video conferencing currently exists at over 200 sites across the state, no further

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than 45 minutes from any point in the state, by legislative order.

DESCRIBE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PROCEDURES OR SYSTEMS FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.

All staff members participate in annual responsibilities reviews with their supervisor(s), which includes querying peers, constituencies, subordinates, and others about professional responsibility areas. Staff members gather data, reflect on feedback, and design goals for the coming year in concert with supervisor(s). The institution also has processes in place for self-study that informs the accreditation and assessment effort across all components of the university, including outreach. Several offices and departments provide resources useful for individual staff, units, or programs seeking specific staff development or more general skill-building activities--examples include Human Resources, Personal Counseling/Growth Center, Wellness Center, Information Technology Services, Staff Senate, Cooperative Extension Service, Distance & Continuing Education, Office of Assessment and Institutional Analysis, Sponsored Programs Administration, and subject-appropriate disciplines.

In areas where existing programs are productive and efficient, RSVP program directors will be encouraged to build on their successes and share best practices to peers. The team approach and participatory management are key components in operational philosophy. To make certain that community needs are addressed, two of our six local Advisory Councils for each of the sites will continue to operate and provide guidance for the projects, including program assessment. A newly created group called the Visioning Council has broad statewide representation and will take up the macro concept of assessment. Local focus groups will implement the plan developed by the Visioning Council. Initiatives that implicitly rely on data gathering and formal assessment strategies (i.e. Bone Builders, mentoring, tutoring and child literacy) are being conducted with reliable and well-constructed instruments.

In the fall of 2006, McGowan and Associates of Memphis, Tennessee, administered a comprehensive assessment of all six RSVP service areas under sponsorship. The assessment included volunteers, station coordinators, advisory council members, and RSVP staff. During 2008-09, all six local advisory councils undertook strategic planning activities using these data to formulate meaningful plans that will guide the programs going forward; planning is on a 10-year scale with action plans and timelines. We are now involved in the scaling up of a Visioning Council with representation from

Narratives

across the state, which meets monthly over interactive television. This group is reviewing our strategic plan, working on updates, gathering data, formulating new plans, and thinking through our overall mission. One tool we use for continuous improvement is Moodle, an open-source online learning space where advisory/visioning council members can go to download documents related to their service areas, interact with staff or other council members from their own or other service areas in either real time or asynchronous discussion.

Other

n/a

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

n/a