

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

A minimum of 220 RSVP volunteers will serve in the Cape May County RSVP program each year from 2014 through 2017. At least 55 (25%) unduplicated volunteers will serve in the primary focus area of Healthy Futures with service activities focused on food delivery and companionship through Mobile Meals and Senior Centers for Aging in Place; providing services and education in Senior Center Nutrition programs and Food Pantries for Obesity & Food and distributing information and coaching in other non-profit health related stations for Access to Care. RSVP volunteers will be serving in stations that are located throughout Cape May County in areas of highest need. At the end of the three year grant over 450 seniors will have been served a nutritionally balanced meal and social support Monday -- Friday, each week, 200-300 seniors will have received a daily social visit and a nutritionally balanced meal delivered to their homes and over 7000 individuals will report increased food security for themselves and their children as a result of CNCS-supported services. The CNCS federal investment of \$55,023 will be supplemented with \$32,968 by The Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

## Strengthening Communities

Cape May County (CMC) is located at the southern tip of New Jersey and has both shore and inland communities. It is comprised of 16 municipalities and is ranked 20th out of 21 counties in New Jersey for population. According to the 2010 Census 97,260 people are full-time residents, but in the summer months the population swells to over 800,000. The population of 97,260 includes 9,720 veterans and 5,886 classified as disabled. The major industry in CMC is tourism creating a seasonal economy. The unemployment rate is 12.5% compared to 8.6% for New Jersey as a whole. The largest loss of jobs beginning in 2007 was in construction, trade, transportation, utilities and retail according to the NJ Department of Labor & Workforce Development. Population breakdown in CMC according to the 2012 CMC Planning Department statistics is that 88.7% are white, 5.1% black, 4.7% are Hispanic and 1.5% are other. The median age in CMC is higher at 47.1 years compared to New Jersey's 38.4 years. The population 65 and over is 21.6% compared to New Jersey's 13.7% and is higher than all other counties in the state. Quick Facts 2013 has the number of individuals in CMC living below the poverty level at 9.6% compared to New Jersey's 9.4%. The areas within CMC with the largest number of individuals living in poverty are Woodbine (38.1%), Wildwood (23.8%), and Lower Township (10.6%). The effects of Super Storm Sandy on businesses and property are still being assessed but according to the Wildwood Chamber of Commerce the economy and quality of daily life

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has been adversely impacted. The largest number of those 65 and over resides on the barrier islands: Avalon (40.5% of population), Cape May Point (55.7%), Sea Isle City (32.3%), West Cape May (28.5%) and Wildwood Crest (26.4%). According to the NJ Workforce & Labor Development this group is projected to increase 18% by 2018 as Baby Boomers begin to retire. More than 5 million of the nation's 7 million Vietnam-era veterans are between 60 and 70 years old, according to data from the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. The majority of retirees come to CMC after selling their life long home to "be at the shore" taking them farther from families and established social ties. The CMC Board of Chosen Freeholders has been the sponsoring agency of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program since 1974. The RSVP office is housed within the CMC Department of Aging (CMCDOA) which creates a close working relationship with this agency. Seniors in CMC are a priority population whose specific needs have been identified through data from the CMCDOA Area Plans and Needs Assessment. These identified needs are addressed in the primary focus area of Healthy Futures with service activities impacting Aging in Place, Obesity & Food, and Access to Care. Over 450 homebound seniors will report increased food security by RSVP volunteers delivering one hot and one cold meal daily and frozen meals for eligible weekend clients as evidenced by a hand delivered post dosage survey. Over 450 ambulatory seniors will report having increased social ties and support due to attending programs and services at Senior Centers (SC) as evidenced by a survey hand delivered quarterly by trained RSVP volunteers and SC staff. Project Healthy Bones, an evidenced based health education program will continue to be presented at SC by RSVP volunteers who have been trained in osteoporosis prevention, nutrition counseling and are monitored by the RSVP Program Director. Participant Measurement is done with pre and post class attendance bone density testing offered by Cape Regional Medical Center (CRMC) and recorded in the RSVP Volunteer Reporter data base. RSVP volunteers continue to serve Stations addressing Healthy Futures at Bethel Community Food Pantry and Holy Redeemer Food Pantry, Volunteers in Medicine, CRMC, The Family Success Center, The CMC Department of Health Medical Reserve Corps, and S.W.I.M., which is water therapy for stroke or accident victims, and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV). Attendance records of clients served, self-reported assessment surveys and project specific data will be collected by the RSVP Program Director and entered into the RSVP Volunteer Reporter data base. Data on RSVP volunteers who are veterans is being collected by the RSVP Program Director and will be entered into the Volunteer Reporter data base. The RSVP volunteers serving in the DAV station provide transport to Veterans and spouses, if needed, to local medical appointments and to out of State Veterans Hospitals as well as other support services. The CMCAC currently has 5 veterans as members. Recruitment of

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veterans for all stations is a high priority for the CMC RSVP and the Program Director will be working closely with the CMC Department of Veteran affairs, all County DAV organizations and the CMC Advisory Council to attain more volunteers.

### **Recruitment and Development**

The current number of Cape May County (CMC) RSVP stations is 30 with 248 active volunteers. Four stations were terminated in 2013 due to inactivity for over one year. Of the 30 stations, 15 fall into the primary focus area of Healthy Futures and are evenly spread within the County. The remaining stations address community needs in the focus areas of Disaster Services, Education, Economic Opportunity, and Capacity Building. The remaining stations are in Other Community Priorities. In early 2013 two new stations were created, The Cape May County Department of Health Medical Reserve Corps (CMCDH/MRC) and The Family Success Center (FSC), hosted by Cape Counseling Services. Both stations provide countywide services addressing community needs identified by the Mobilization for Action through Planning and Partnership (MAPP) as well as meeting the criteria in each of the Focus Areas. These stations offer RSVP volunteers a wide range of service activities in which to use their skills. The diversity of RSVP stations and volunteers mirrors that of the county as a whole with Caucasians making up the largest demographic group (88.7%), Blacks (5.1%), Hispanic (4.7%) and other (1.9%). The most community specific station is The Bethel Commandment Church Food Pantry which serves a predominantly minority population and whose RSVP volunteers live within the community. Recruitment of veterans for all stations is a high priority for the CMC RSVP and the Program Director will be working closely with the CMC Department of Veteran Affairs and the RSVP Advisory Council (AC) to increase the number of veteran RSVP volunteers. While only 5% of all RSVP volunteers state that they have a disability, it is believed that as the average age of a CMC RSVP volunteer is 75, the number is actually higher. All station and service activities are handicap accessible. The Program Director will attend events such as the Cape May County Health Resource Day in Wildwood, the Avalon Home & Health Show and the Cape May County Disabilities Day, to recruit new volunteers and showcase RSVP opportunities. All recruitment efforts will be targeted to the five Focus Areas with emphasis on services within Healthy Futures. A Quarterly Newsletter containing RSVP information will be distributed to area churches, hospitals, Senior Centers and municipal offices by e-mail or mailed if computer access is unavailable. Capacity Building stations such as the RSVP Advisory Council and the CMC Clerks Office will be recruiting RSVP volunteers as well. Events such as the Volunteer Recognition Brunch held in September which is attended by the Board of Chosen Freeholders, State Senator, State Assemblymen, and our Congressman will be

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highlighted in the RSVP Newsletter, CMC web site and local press coverage. RSVP program information on the County website will be redesigned for easier usability and access for the public seeking volunteer opportunities and RSVP information. The Corporation for National Service RSVP symbol will be used as a portal to the site where program information will be kept current by the RSVP Program Director. Information to be included will be a listing of RSVP Stations; volunteer opportunities; training opportunities such as the Healthy Bones Peer Leader Training; current and upcoming events, or any specific station need.

### **Program Management**

Developing and managing the current 30 RSVP Stations in Cape May County (CMC) is handled by the Program Director (PD) under the sponsorship of the Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders. Currently all 30 CMC RSVP stations and station managers meet the Corporation for National Community Service (CNCS) guidelines including, current MOU, written and documented orientation and training of RSVP volunteers, accurate documentation of volunteer hours, clients served and for evidenced based programs such as Healthy Bones, evaluation and measurement of service outcomes. All RSVP stations and RSVP volunteers have received a copy of RSVP stated program regulations and prohibited activities. Fifteen of the established stations fall into the primary focus area of Healthy Futures and are evenly spread within the County. CMC has successfully run the RSVP program for thirty nine years with accurate and timely reporting of supportive data obtained from Social Assistance Management System (SAMS), station activity logs and written surveys, to CNCS. Veterans serve as RSVP volunteers in the majority of stations and the majority of stations serve veterans. The goals and objectives of Stations such as School Mentoring, V.I.M. (Volunteers in Medicine), Food Banks, Mobile Meals, S.W.I.M., are evaluated by the RSVP PD and the Station Supervisor (SS) with a hand delivered written survey delivered by trained RSVP volunteers or SC staff after the station specific amount of dosages. Survey results are evaluated by SS, the RSVP PD and the CMCDOA. SS review survey results and recommend changes with the CMCDOA Director or if it is an RSVP program, to the RSVP PD. The RSVP PD visits all stations regularly and maintains open communication with SS and RSVP volunteers. The stations in Other Community Priorities which have certain service activities not aligned with the CNCS agency wide priority measures are Cape Regional Medical Center (CRMC) with its affiliated thrift shop ET Cetera, CMC Museum, and the Good Timers, a senior band which performs gratis at the RSVP Recognition Event. The average age of these volunteers is 74 years and to quote Dr. Erwin Tan, Director of Senior Corps "Volunteering provides many older adults with a purpose. That purpose can help sustain a healthier lifestyle that

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includes increased physical, mental and social activity." The health benefits associated with volunteering are a means to combat isolation and loneliness. According to research conducted by the Home Instead Senior Care network, seniors 65 and older who volunteer, 99% want to make a difference. Whether it's passing out lunches to the homeless or building a home for a family in need, nearly all senior volunteers just want to make a difference. These stations provide that opportunity for RSVP volunteers. The RSVP PD has been working with the CRMC SS, where the largest number of RSVP volunteers is serving, in assisting interested volunteers to transition into service activities in alignment with CNCS agency wide priority measures, such as those offered by The Center for Lifestyle Management (CLM) a program within CRMC. CLM offers RSVP volunteer service activities such as distributing health literature, assisting in evidenced based educational classes, wellness programs and distributing information regarding healthcare services in Cape May County and would be within the guidelines of Healthy Futures. No new recruitment of nonaligned service activities will be done by the RSVP PD. The RSVP program has an Advisory Council (CMCAC) representing the diverse population of the County with one member representing the Department of Aging. They are an extension of the Director and are valuable in collecting data from various stations needed to complete reports for the CNCS and to share with the community through speaking engagements and newly planned media coverage. By enlisting the help of the CMCAC, members are kept aware of the activities of the stations and can see the value or shortcomings of these activities to the community. During bi-monthly meetings, suggestions and ideas are presented which help to develop and strengthen existing programs and to address specified community needs. The RSVP PD will be introducing computerized documentation forms to simplifying prompt collection of data. Historically SS have done all documentation by hand on paper forms. Annually all active volunteers are surveyed by mail with the intent to measure effectiveness and satisfaction with present assignments and with the overall RSVP program.

### **Organizational Capability**

The Cape May County (CMC) RSVP has been under the sponsorship of the Board of Chosen Freeholders since 1974, with the Freeholder Director of Health and Human Services directly overseeing the Program and secondary supervision from the Director of the Cape May County Department of Aging/Disabilities (CMCDOA). The Freeholder also acts as liaison to Association for Retarded Citizens, Cape Counseling Services, Jersey Cape Diagnostic, Training & Opportunity Center, and other local groups where she is made aware of needs within the community. These needs are discussed with the RSVP PD and the members of the RSVP Advisory Council (AC) at bi-monthly

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meetings so that the Council is able to plan and implement capacity building activities such as recruitment for focus area stations. The AC is comprised of fifteen diverse members of the community (seven women, seven men four of whom are veterans, and one minority), the Freeholder and RSVP PD. This RSVP program is managed by one paid employee, the PD, with \$55,023 CNCS funds matched with \$32,968 CMC funds. A part time RSVP volunteer provides clerical support and outreach support. There are no plans to select additional staff for this Program. It is the responsibility of the RSVP PD to ensure that all stations are in compliance with CNCS regulations, service activities are in alignment with CNCS agency wide priority measures, that all service activities are evaluated for their effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Station supervisors (SS) provide the direct supervision of volunteers, trainings and service activities. The RSVP PD is also responsible to plan and implement one recognition event for RSVP volunteers each grant year. Recognition of stations and RSVP volunteers is also managed by highlighting events and activities in a quarterly Newsletter which is distributed throughout CMC. Financial management for this Program is a system of checks and balances beginning with the RSVP PD and ending with the CMC Treasures office consistent with the fiscal policies and procedures of CMC government. All audits are scheduled through that office and it remains consistent and concise and has proven to be an excellent arrangement. RSVP staff follows excepted procedures when requesting to make purchases, which are made through the County purchasing office with CMCDOA approval ensuring the availability of funds, proper billing procedures and the ability to purchase through County pricing and ensuring timely payment. The County Administrator has approved the use of a County car for all speaking engagements, meetings and other business that is relevant to this Program. Personnel policies and procedures, office space, computer technology and maintenance, telephone, fax, selected printing needs and training as needed are generously supplied by the County Administrator. The mission statement adopted by the CMC RSVP is that of the CNCS which is "To improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering"

### **Other**

N/A

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

N/A