

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

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At the Sumter, SC RSVP project an estimated 280 volunteers will serve. Some of their activities will include:

1. Volunteers' helping with Food Security will assist with packing MoW (Meals on Wheels) as well as delivery. The volunteer is also someone who might recognize changes in the clients' physical or mental condition and alert the appropriate contact. At Christian Charities and United Ministries volunteers will help distribute food to those in need.
2. Hospital/Clinical support volunteers will not only help with various jobs at our local hospital but will help with scheduling, transportation and administrative duties at our local VACBOC (Veterans Administration Community Based Outpatient Clinic).
3. To help foster independent living, volunteers will help with scheduling and transportation through the VACBOC (Veterans Administration Community Based Outpatient Clinic) and our local AAA's Aging & Disability Resource Center's Regional Transportation Program. Volunteers help seniors, veterans and the disabled not only get to medical appointments but also to the drug and grocery store, bank etc.
4. To help with our local Justice System trained RSVP volunteer arbitrators conduct hearings and monitor juveniles' through CJAP (Community Juvenile Arbitration Program). CJAP is a community-based diversion program for first-time juvenile offenders charged with committing nonviolent crimes.
5. Volunteers with Tuomey Hospice will help terminally ill patients and their families through support, companionship and administrative duties at the hospice office.
6. Congregate Meal Site volunteers will support and/or serve clients meals, plan & implement programing, assist with administrative duties as well as visit with seniors.

The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures. At the end of the three-year grant, long term or permanent changes/improvements are expected in the community due to the services of RSVP volunteers. The CNCS federal investment of \$58,450 will be supplemented by \$25,050.

## Strengthening Communities

### Strengthening Communities

\* Description of Service Community: Sumter is almost in the center of South Carolina and approximately 45 miles from the state capital, Columbia. The 2010 census shows Sumter County with a population of 108,052, while 40,524 reside within the Sumter City Limits. The median

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household income in Sumter County is \$40,542. 18.3% of the population over 18 years of age in Sumter County live below the poverty level and 22.1% of people over the age of 75 live below the poverty level in Sumter County. This figure compares to 17% in South Carolina and 11.5% in the United States. Sumter County is a very rural, poor area where need is greater than the resources available. Sumter, according to the census, is a very diverse community, 48% white, 47% black and 5% other. As of Feb. 2010 the unemployment rate in Sumter County was 13.9%, compared to 12.5% in South Carolina. The State of South Carolina Community Profile states that there are 20,580 adults 55 years and older residing in Sumter County. This number is expected to increase as the baby boomers come of age. We also have a military base in our community, Shaw Air Force Base. Between 2007 and 2011 Sumter statistics show we averaged 11,798 Veterans living in Sumter. Most young military retirees start a second career, but this military presence does give us many "baby boomer" volunteers (spouses too).

Of the 46 counties in South Carolina, Sumter County ranks 9th in mortality. Certainly, improving our community's health is a major need that would go a long way toward improving the quality of life in Sumter County.

Volunteer hours, accurately reported as they assist with food assembly and delivery at our Home Delivered Meal station; provide transportation for seniors and the disabled to the Dr., pharmacy, grocery store, etc., through Santee Lynches (AAA) Transportation Program and supportive help with client intake & eligibility forms and packing food boxes at the Christian Charities and United Ministries food banks will enable the stations to accurately supply the RSVP project with measureable outcomes. Transportation and office support are also provided by volunteers for veterans through our local VACBOC (Veterans Administration Community Based Outpatient Clinic) for appointments at the VACBOC but also at the VA Hospital in Columbia, SC (45 miles).

Managing Information & Data: RSVP uses the Volunteer Reporter database system to manage our volunteers, stations and all the data in support of that effort. The volunteer hours are reported to program staff monthly. RSVP gathers result figures (measurable changes in the community, people served and results of the service activity) from the Station managers. Internally, our agency uses AIM to keep records on Meals-on-Wheels and Group Dining and we have Meals served and clients served at our fingertips. We have a wonderful relationship with the Stations that are not part of our agency. The site managers are so appreciative of the benefits we provide their volunteers that sharing hours and information has never been an issue. Sumter Senior Services uses the PeachTree accounting system to support and sustain all Agency financial issues and also maintain the financial

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records of the RSVP project.

Veterans are served by volunteers at the VACBOC (Veterans Administration Community Based Outpatient Clinic). The volunteers screen perspective benefit recipients and help with appointments and transportation. Several of our Home Delivered Meal and Group Dining clients are veterans. At the Red Cross Office at Shaw AFB, volunteers serve in several areas, but are most visible dispersing prescriptions at the AFB Pharmacy.

### Recruitment and Development

Recruitment and development

Plan for Assuring High Quality Volunteer Assignments and Opportunities: RSVP Sumter is a thriving program that strives to provide meaningful volunteer opportunities and serve the needs of adults age 55 years or older residing in Sumter County. Over a three year span, RSVP sends out an annual assessment to all of the Volunteers (yr. 1), Station Managers (yr.2) and Advisory Council members (yr.3). Our RSVP AC assists in reviewing and tallying up the annual assessment. We use the data gathered to plan program improvements, make station recommendations to the station managers and plan volunteer and station management training. RSVP Sumter strives to find the perfect volunteer placement for our volunteers. New volunteers are interviewed to determine their interests, likes and dislikes. The majority of the volunteer training is accomplished at the assigned volunteer site. The assessments are an aide that staff can use to make training recommendations to Station Managers. Hopefully the volunteers' skills and interests will be a good match with the agency expectations. Good solid training should result in a long-term volunteer commitment. RSVP asks that the training be on-going, that the volunteer be supervised, and that "how's it going?" and "thank you's" be given out on a regular basis. Many of our senior volunteers have never been exposed to computers and they are thrilled to be learning simple tasks and data entry at the volunteer site. RSVP staff visit the stations and meet with Station Managers regularly to assist with problems and answer questions.

Recruitment of new, worthwhile stations is also necessary so we can continue to offer meaningful volunteer opportunities while we serve the needs of the community in which we live and work. With 22.1% of our over 75 county residents living below the poverty level and 9th in mortality in the state, our RSVP project will continue to recruit and encourage new volunteers to serve at our stations working to improve the health of our community.

DIVERSITY has never been an issue in Sumter County. Our community characteristics show we are a county made up of 48% white, 47% black and 5% other. Our current RSVP program volunteer statistics indicate 211 black volunteers, 133 white and 2 Hispanic; as well as 244 female and 77 male

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volunteers.

VETERAN recruitment is not a problem, with Shaw Air Force Base in Sumter County and over 11,000 known veterans in the area we have many in our RSVP project. Also, because of our senior population statistics we have many more veteran widows.

We have one totally blind volunteer and one totally deaf volunteer. Certainly in our senior population we many volunteers who have reduced hearing, poor vision and decreased mobility.

RETENTION: Our goal is to provide meaningful placements for RSVP volunteers by offering a variety of worthwhile stations. This allows us to offer our volunteers a choice of several volunteer assignments, as well as serve the needs of the community in which we live and work. RSVP offers \$.14 per mile reimbursement, \$2.00 toward a meal if the volunteer works through a mealtime and the volunteer insurance are all RSVP "perks" that aid in retention. The satisfaction of helping those in need is a huge part of retention. I send out tips, monthly, to the station managers about retention and recognition. I try to remind them that volunteers need to be trained (well), they need to enjoy what they do, they need to feel appreciated for what they do and they need to be thanked. THANK YOU! Inappropriate placement is a big reason volunteers leave...I interview new volunteers and hope to discover what their interests are...a volunteer has to enjoy what they are doing or they will "walk". Not enough training or supervision...another reason volunteers leave. Sometimes the program itself has problems that the volunteer can "feel", for example, inadequate funding or moral support. Poor recognition efforts by the station, can contribute to volunteers leaving. "THANK YOU "and "we appreciate you" need to be sincere and often.

RECOGNITION: RSVP Sumter has a volunteer recognition party every year. Certificates are awarded for hours served, door prizes are given, everyone is given a small gift and a nurse from one of our local hospice stations takes blood pressures. We send out birthday cards monthly, with a birthday wish and a thank you. The bi-annual newsletter thanks everyone for their hard work and spotlights a station and a volunteer. As program staff, we remind the station managers over and over volunteers need to feel appreciated for what they do and they need to be thanked. THANK YOU!

### Program Management

#### PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Station Management: RSVP Sumter is an older project in a small town. Staff visits it's stations frequently, has training annually for station managers and prohibited activities (in addition to benefits) are printed in the RSVP Handbook. Our RSVP AC assists in reviewing and tallying up the program assessment. We use the data gathered to plan program improvements, make station

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recommendations to the station managers and plan volunteer and station management training. The site managers are so appreciative of the benefits RSVP provides their volunteers that sharing hours and information has never been an issue.

Volunteer Oversight: RSVP Sumter is an older project in a small town. Staff visits it's stations frequently, has training annually for station managers and prohibited activities (in addition to benefits) are printed in the RSVP Handbook. On the Volunteer Timesheet that lists all of the stations volunteers (received monthly), in addition to hours and mileage there is a column for Volunteer Service Performed. The Station manager must sign the Timesheet, it is then forwarded, reviewed and signed by RSVP staff. In addition, the Volunteer Travel Log for Mileage Reimbursement, also received monthly, along with hours and mileage there is a column for Volunteer Service Performed. The Volunteer and the Station manager must both sign the monthly Log, it is then forwarded, reviewed and signed by RSVP staff. This insures no monies are spent on prohibited activity. Station training and volunteer supervision are keys to success in this area.

Our Primary Focus Area, Healthy Futures, is a natural fit with our agency, Sumter Senior Services. Our lead agency has had the Meals-on-Wheels (HDM) contract in Sumter since 1976. Annually, an assessment is done by agency staff on all of the HDM clients, this is mandatory per HDM funding sources...our Executive director has already agreed to include the RSVP HDM Survey with the annual assessment. After the first year, we should have 100% of the responses. The RSVP Timesheets will also be used for measurement. Christian Charities, 100% RSVP volunteer staffed, and United Ministries both send out statistical reports quarterly and return Timesheets in promptly. The station manager at the Shaw AFB Red Cross run pharmacy is an RSVP Volunteer and she sits on my Advisory Council, a checklist/questionnaire is in the planning stages at the pharmacy.

Per regulations, the Advisory Council is established and annual training for AC and Station Managers was held in June. Volunteer Reporter keeps track of due dates for MOU's and volunteer birth dates, I can tell at a glance when an MOU is due and birthdates are on a spreadsheet. Our State Program Specialist did a program compliance monitoring in March 2012 and the feedback was excellent.

### Organizational Capability

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Oversight: We use the Volunteer Reporter database system to manage our volunteers, stations and all the data in support of that effort. The volunteer hours are reported to program staff monthly. RSVP gathers result figures (measurable changes in the community, people served and results of the service activity) from the Station managers. Internally, our agency uses AIM to keep records on Meals-on-

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Wheels and Group Dining and we have Meals served and clients served at our fingertips. Sumter Senior Services uses the PeachTree accounting system to support and sustain all Agency and RSVP financial records. The Agency has an annual audit done by an outside accounting firm and our audit is on file at the CNCS State Office. We have implemented a manual system to track in-kind donations. Two of our Stations (hospital and hospice) provide free lunch for their volunteers and we count the lunches as in-kind.

Staff Positions. The current RSVP Director has a total of twelve years' experience as RSVP Director with Sumter Senior Services. She is a licensed Assisted Living Administrator and loves working with seniors and RSVP. We are a small RSVP project with one full time staff person. The ED and Financial Director both are budgeted time with RSVP and contribute to our program's success. We are also a small agency and when needed, everyone on staff pitches in (i.e. recognitions).

Sumter Senior Services staff work well with the RSVP staff. Ms. Shirley Baker is Sumter Senior Services Executive Director. She has been with agency and serving Sumter's elderly population for over 35 years. She is committed to RSVP. Oversight is provided by the ED in monthly budget reviews with the RSVP Project Director and the agency Bookkeeper. One-on-one program reviews occur quarterly. Our agency Financial Director has been with agency almost seven years, prior to that she was with a local plant. She is meticulous in the handling of financial matters. The Financial Director provides financial oversight of the RSVP Project; she monitors the monthly drawdown and tracks all of the RSVP income and expenditures. Sumter Senior Services provides the administrative, bookkeeping and financial support to operate the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. We have a part time fundraiser on staff (our former agency Executive Director is retired works for us part time raising money). He is great at getting the Agency name and RSVP out into the community. A P.O. is required for all purchases, presented to our E.D. and she must sign it and then it goes to our Financial Director. Sumter Senior Services built a new Senior Center about 12 years ago with the help of a State grant and we have been saving since then to remodel and add administrative offices. We have just moved in to our new offices...an administrative wing in addition to enlarging the congregate meal area and tripling the size of the kitchen. Until this time the hot HDMs were packaged in one location and the frozen in another. Now everything is under one roof. After years of agency fundraising and saving we were able to provide the cash match to receive a PIP grant and move in to beautiful new space...debt free. Sumter's RSVP project still reimburses \$.14 a mile for volunteer travel and \$2.00 for a meal...and we wish it could be more.

## Other

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N/A

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

N/A