

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

An estimated 130 RSVP volunteers will serve across the tri-county service area of Huron, Sanilac, and Tuscola in the State of Michigan. Some of their activities will include tutoring elementary school-age children, delivering meals to the homebound elderly, transporting non-mobile seniors to health care appointments, making reassurance telephone calls to the frail (often homebound) elderly, and visiting with isolated seniors. The primary focus area of this project is Education. At the end of the three-year grant, the following outcomes are anticipated: In the primary focus area of Education, there will be 30 students in grades K-12 that participated in the mentoring or tutoring or other education program, including CNCS-supported service learning, who demonstrated improved academic engagement (ED27); in the Healthy Futures focus area, there will be a total of 485 homebound or older adults who reported having increased social ties/perceived social support (H9). This total includes 25 individuals receiving Companionship services, 400 individuals receiving Food Delivery Services, and 60 individuals receiving Transportation services. Also in the Healthy Futures focus area, 800 individuals will report increased food security of themselves and their children (household food security) as a result of CNCS-supported services (H12).

The CNCS federal investment of \$20,221 will be supplemented by \$26,687 from a grant from the State of Michigan and \$1,289 from local funds.

## Strengthening Communities

### Introduction

The Human Development Commission (HDC) is a rural, nonprofit Community Action Agency dedicated to alleviating poverty in the "thumb" area of Michigan's mitten-shaped Lower Peninsula. HDC is a recognized leader in providing programs, services, and opportunities for low-income, senior, or otherwise vulnerable populations. The agency's purpose is to plan, coordinate, implement, and evaluate services that support the health, education, and welfare of residents within the "thumb" counties of Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, and Tuscola. HDC uses federal, state, and local resources to identify community needs, establish short and longer-range goals, develop strategic alliances, and administer needed programs and services. One of the most visible programs making a difference in the overall health of local communities and their residents is the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

Since 2001, HDC has been the proud sponsor of an RSVP project that serves the three, largely rural

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counties of Huron, Sanilac, and Tuscola. The three counties span 2,614 square miles and are home to 131,961 people [2010 U.S. Census]. Adults age 55+ comprise 32% of the RSVP service area's total population, and baby boomers ages 55 to 65 represent half (50%) of the service area's senior population (persons age 55+).

Between 2000 and 2010, the RSVP service area experienced an overall population decline with Huron at --8.2%, Sanilac at --3.2%, and Tuscola at --4.4%. During the same period, each county had an increase in its senior population with Huron at +11.8%, Sanilac at +19.4%, and Tuscola at +24.7%. As the baby boomer generation ages and as the "youngest" boomers celebrate their 65th birthday by 2030, these population trends are expected to continue.

### Community Needs

HDC's RSVP project will address community needs regarding student tutoring, senior meals, senior transportation, senior safety, and other locally determined needs. First, RSVP will have a primary focus area of Education, which will emphasize the academic and social/behavioral achievements of elementary school-age children, in particular those who are low-income, disabled, and/or have other needs that may impede learning. HDC anticipates 33 of the 130 unduplicated volunteers (25.4%) will be enrolled in this primary focus area. Second, RSVP will have a Healthy Futures focus, which will respond to the desire of the region's elderly population to age-in-place, in particular the need for nourishment, mobility, and social interaction. HDC anticipates 68 of the 130 unduplicated volunteers (52.3%) will be enrolled in this other focus area. Lastly, RSVP will address other locally determined priorities like serving veterans/military families (see separate work plan) and survivors of domestic violence. HDC anticipates 29 of the 130 unduplicated volunteers (22.3%) will be enrolled in this community priorities focus area. A brief description of the Education and Healthy Futures foci follows.

#### 1. Elementary School-age Children

Reading and math assessments are administered each fall to public school students in grades 3 through 8 via the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP). For other core subjects, writing assessments are given in grades 4 and 7, science in grades 5 and 8, and social studies in grades 6 and 9. Because RSVP volunteers work largely on reading/math skill building (and social

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engagement) and because these volunteers most often work with students in grades K-4, the Fall 2012 MEAP results for students in grade 4 are being used to demonstrate the need for RSVP tutoring in the counties of Huron, Sanilac, and Tuscola.

More than half of the public school districts in each RSVP county had a higher percentage of students in grade 4 that were less than proficient in reading and/or math when compared with the State average. (Less than proficient includes both students that were partially proficient and not proficient.) The percent of students that were less than proficient in reading and/or math for all public school districts in the RSVP service area is shown below. School districts with MEAP results that are at or below the State average in at least one subject area (see \*) will become targeted placement sites for new and/or additional RSVP volunteers.

State of Michigan...Less than proficient in reading: 32%; in math: 55%

### Huron County School Districts

- a. Bad Axe Public Schools...Less than proficient in reading: 32%; in math: 55%
- b. Caseville Public Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 55%; in math: 77%
- c. Elkton-Pigeon-Bay Port Schools...Less than proficient in reading: 26%; in math: 44%
- d. Harbor Beach Comm. Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 20%; in math: 55%
- e. North Huron Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 22%; in math: 69%
- f. Owendale-Gagetown Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 45%; in math: 70%
- g. Port Hope Community Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 33%; in math: 100%
- h. Ubley Community Schools...Less than proficient in reading: 22%; in math: 31%

### Sanilac County School Districts

- a. Brown City Community Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 26%; in math: 55%
- b. Carsonville-Port Sanilac Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 37%; in math: 46%
- c. Croswell-Lexington Schools...Less than proficient in reading: 19%; in math: 27%
- d. Deckerville Community Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 36%; in math: 55%
- e. Marlette Community Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 41%; in math: 58%
- f. Peck Community Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 27%; in math: 57%
- g. Sandusky Community Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 27%; in math: 58%

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### Tuscola County School Districts

- a. Akron-Fairgrove Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 50%; in math: 68%
- b. Caro Community Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 47%; in math: 72%
- c. Cass City Public Schools...Less than proficient in reading: 24%; in math: 40%
- d. Kingston Community Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 21%; in math: 56%
- e. Mayville Community Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 40%; in math: 60%
- f. Millington Community Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 34%; in math: 61%
- g. Reese Public Schools: Less than proficient in reading...20%; in math: 52%
- h. Unionville-Sebewaing Schools: Less than proficient in reading...12%; in math: 34%
- i. Vassar Public Schools\*...Less than proficient in reading: 27%; in math: 69%

### 2. Elderly Population & Nourishment

Well-balanced meals are a necessity for persons of any age, but the role of nutrition becomes even more important with advancing age. As people age, their muscle mass decreases and their metabolism slows, burning fewer calories. The aging human body senses a decreased need for calories, and many older adults lose interest in food. Isolation, depression, physical limitations (which can include IADLs like shopping and cooking), dental problems (which can interfere with chewing), medications (which can suppress the appetite) may also lead to apathy regarding food. All of these factors can contribute to poor nutrition in the elderly, ultimately leading to increased health risks and mortality [Harvard Health Watch, 2004].

Doctors recommend a well-balanced diet for seniors, including a variety of fruits, vegetables, protein, and whole grains, with lower sodium and calorie levels, to maintain and improve overall health. Studies indicate that older adults may not get enough calcium, fiber, Omega 3 fatty acids, Vitamin B12, or Vitamin D in their diet. Low levels of calcium and Vitamin D are linked to bone loss and osteoporosis [Yale School of Medicine, 2012], and a lack of Vitamin B12 may lead to health problems including memory loss. The Omega 3 fatty acids help to reduce inflammation, which causes heart disease, cancer, and arthritis [Brain, Behavior, and Immunity, 2012]. Continuing a healthy lifestyle when appetites and food needs change can be a difficult obstacle. More than one in six live-at-home seniors are at risk for under- or malnutrition [Journal of Clinical Nursing, 2009]. Depression and loneliness are familiar problems for seniors who live alone, and these complications can have adverse

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effects on their diets. Getting a wholesome meal delivered daily by a friendly face is nourishing, both physically and emotionally.

### 3. Elderly Population & Mobility

Adults age 65 and over represent an increasing proportion of all drivers in the United States, and older drivers have higher rates of fatal crashes, based on miles driven, than any other age group except young drivers [Insurance Institute for Highway Safety]. In 2010, 34 million drivers in the United States were at least age 65, and estimates suggest there will be more than 40 million older drivers by 2020 [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration]. In 2010, 5,484 older drivers were killed and 189,000 were injured in traffic crashes in the United States, accounting for 17% of all traffic fatalities. Research data indicate most traffic fatalities involving older drivers occur in the daytime, on a weekday, and include another vehicle.

Transportation is a vital part of a healthy, active lifestyle. Mobility declines (includes loss of driving) are linked to depression, isolation, loneliness, and reduced life satisfaction. Seniors are often embarrassed to ask family or friends for help with transportation. Many will cancel their appointments if they are unable to travel without asking for help. Over 50% of seniors report they stay home when transportation options are not available [Baily, Linda, Aging Americans: Stranded Without Options, Surface Transportation Policy Project, April 2004].

For seniors that no longer (or are reluctant to) drive, transportation alternatives are critical for later-life independence and mobility, especially in rural communities with less densely populated areas. Rural community-based transportation programs can effectively meet the needs of seniors, ensuring their rightful place in community life. Senior-friendly transportation services must strive to be available, acceptable, accessible and affordable.

### 4. Elderly Population & Social Isolation

Part of being human means social interaction with others. A serious factor affecting seniors' life quality and even shortening their life span is loneliness and social isolation. The National Council on Aging states one in every six seniors living alone in the United States faces physical, cultural, and/or geographical barriers that isolate them from their peers and communities. Older adults often require

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increased social supports during difficult life changes -- retirement, declining health, and the death of spouses and lifelong friends --which strains the limited financial and staffing resources of local networks.

Seniors living alone without social supports are more likely to be isolated, depressed, and in poverty. A lack of companionship can cause seniors to internalize these negative feelings, which often compounds loneliness and isolation while increasing the risk of death and stroke in the elderly [Comfort Keepers (website), retrieved 2013].

Studies have repeatedly shown that seniors who receive social supports benefit significantly in terms of their psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and overall physical health. As Dr. Eric Klineberg, professor of sociology at New York University writes, "...of all seniors living alone and below the poverty line, one out of every three sees neither friends nor neighbors for as much as two weeks at a time, and one out of five has no phone conversations with friends."

Service Activities and Performance Measure

Outputs/Outcomes

HDC's RSVP project will respond to the documented community needs described above by implementing established and new service activities that result in specific outputs/outcomes as described below. (Outputs are provided only when no outcome is selected for a given activity.)

### 1. Regarding Elementary School-age Children

In recent years, community interest in tutoring as a means of helping students achieve greater educational success has increased. Tutoring is one-to-one engagement that helps students identify and overcome academic and/or social obstacles confronting them. Tutoring provides tools for students to work at their full potential as independently as possible. When compared to other challenges in elementary school classrooms that often involve distractions, intimidations, and bullying from other pupils, the relaxed, non-threatening environment of the tutor and student represents a "safe haven" for learning that can last a lifetime.

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With decreased school funding and increased classroom sizes, RSVP volunteers will tutor students who struggle to become successful learners before, during, and after school (including lunch periods). RSVP volunteers will serve as Homework Heroes in public school districts, providing one-to-one attention that academically and socially challenged students might not otherwise receive.

HDC anticipates 28 of the 33 unduplicated RSVP volunteers in the primary focus area of Education will serve as Homework Heroes. The anticipated outcome for this service activity is "ED27: Thirty students in grades K-12 that participated in the...tutoring... program...who demonstrated improved academic engagement."

NOTE: HDC's RSVP project will place the remaining five volunteers in the primary focus of Education with local MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) groups. MOPS develops mothers of preschoolers (birth through kindergarten) to realize their potential as women, mothers, and leaders. RSVP volunteers assist with early childhood activities during MOPS meetings. The anticipated output for this activity is "ED21: Twelve children who completed early childhood education programs." No outcome, however, is selected for the activity.

### 2. Regarding Elderly Population & Nourishment

Obtaining a healthy meal daily (without the need to shop, cook, and clean up) allows many seniors to remain in their homes who would otherwise have to pay for live-in help, relocate to live with family, or move to alternative housing like assisted living. An April 2012 study by the Wilder Research Group found that over one-quarter of seniors surveyed said they would be unable to manage meals on their own if they did not have a home delivered meal (HDM) service. Nearly half said it would be hard to stay where they live now without the meal service, and nearly a quarter said they would probably have to go live somewhere else.

RSVP volunteers will serve as HDM Drivers, ensuring hot, nutritious meals arrive on time for midday dining. In addition, drivers will help to reduce feelings of isolation, as they may be the only social contact the senior has in a given day. Drivers will also be trained to observe and report any changes in the senior and/or the home environment.

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HDC anticipates 22 of the 68 unduplicated RSVP volunteers in the primary focus area of Healthy Futures will serve as HDM Drivers. The anticipated outcome for this service activity is "H9: Four hundred homebound OR older adults and individuals with disabilities who reported having increased social ties/perceived social support."

### 3. Regarding Elderly Population & Mobility

A vibrant community depends on the participation and contribution of all its members, from young adults to senior citizens. Accessible, dependable transportation is a fundamental part of a vibrant community's infrastructure, allowing residents to secure the goods, services, and social contacts needed for daily existence and life quality. The ability to drive (or access reliable transportation alternatives) represents freedom, control, and self-reliance.

Transportation alternatives promote increased independence and life satisfaction among older adults, especially seniors with mobility limitations (e.g., physical disability, lack of a vehicle, relinquished driver's license, etc.). To aid in maintaining a healthy lifestyle among older adults that do not (or are reluctant to) drive, RSVP volunteers will serve as Senior Transportation Drivers for those that need:

- \* To attend to medical concerns (e.g., appointment with an audiologist, dentist, physician, optometrist, or other medical specialist)
- \* Lab draws, medical tests, or other health-related treatments at a hospital, rehabilitation center, or other medical location
- \* Prescriptions filled at a local pharmacy or retailer with an in-store pharmacy
- \* To attend senior dining centers for noontime meals and socialization
- \* Other assistance (reviewed on a case-by-case basis)

HDC anticipates 16 of the 68 unduplicated RSVP volunteers in the primary focus area of Healthy Futures will serve as Senior Transportation Drivers. The anticipated outcome for this service activity is "H9: Sixty homebound OR older adults and individuals with disabilities who reported having increased social ties/perceived social support."

### 4. Regarding Elderly Population & Social Interaction

Social isolation and loneliness can have a detrimental effect on physical health and general wellbeing, especially among older adults. Seniors living alone are prime candidates for injury, depression, and

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disconnect from family/friends and community. Telephone reassurance calls and/or personal visits help to keep seniors safe and independent in their homes.

As part of the Safe Seniors initiative, RSVP volunteers will serve as KISS Callers, providing telephone reassurance calls for the isolated elderly. "Keeping Independent Seniors Safe" or KISS calls are placed regularly, sometimes daily, depending on the senior's needs. During friendly chats, seniors and volunteers share updates on the latest news and community events as well as stored memories of a time not so long ago. Volunteers are trained to listen for questionable situations and respond appropriately.

In addition, RSVP volunteers will also serve as Silver Companions, providing friendly visiting for the isolated elderly. At-home visits occur weekly, depending on the senior's needs. Visiting may include genial conversation, reading, game playing, walking, and other activities agreed upon by the senior, senior's caregiver (if appropriate), volunteer, and RSVP project. Volunteers are trained to watch for questionable situations and respond appropriately.

HDC anticipates 18 of the 68 unduplicated RSVP volunteers in the primary focus area of Healthy Futures will serve as KISS Callers and/or Silver Companions. The anticipated outcome for this service activity is "H9: Twenty-five homebound OR older adults and individuals with disabilities who reported having increased social ties/perceived social support."

NOTE: HDC's RSVP project will place the remaining 12 volunteers in the primary focus area of Healthy Futures with an emergency food pantry. RSVP volunteers will provide food pantry support, distributing emergency food packages to those who are food insecure. The anticipated outcome for this service activity is "H12: 800 individuals that reported increased food security of themselves and their children (household food security) as a result of CNCS-supported services."

### 5. Regarding Other Community Priorities

Starting in fiscal year 2014, HDC and other strategic community partners will introduce an RSVP project with veterans/military families as the primary beneficiary. The agency will begin thoughtfully

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on a small scale with some type of community drive (e.g., non-perishable foods, hygiene products, etc.). HDC will coordinate this effort with three county-based Departments of Veteran Affairs, the Aleda E. Lutz Veteran Affairs Medical Center (Huron), and/or the recently opened Anka Akron, a transitional housing program for veterans experiencing homelessness and co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders (Tuscola).

HDC anticipates six of the 29 unduplicated RSVP volunteers in the community priorities area will participate in the veterans' drive. A separate work plan is prepared for this RSVP activity. The anticipated output for this activity is "V1: One hundred veterans receiving CNCS-supported assistance." No outcome, however, is selected for the activity.

RSVP volunteers will also serve their communities in other capacities. Examples of other community priorities activities that support the work of RSVP volunteers include:

- \* Huron County Baby Pantry, a bi-monthly distribution site for infant, toddler, and preschooler needs (e.g., formula, diapers, clothing, etc.)
- \* Huron County Homeless Coalition, a grassroots organization offering housing support for homeless and near homeless households
- \* Tuscola County Department of Human Services, a state agency that helps the low-income with basic needs of shelter, food, and health care
- \* Caro Chamber of Commerce, a local organization of businesses that promotes community economic development
- \* HER Friends, an auxiliary body of the Thumb Area Assault Crisis Center (a 24/7 emergency shelter for survivors of domestic violence and their children)

HDC will place the remaining 23 volunteers in various community priorities areas. The anticipated output for this activity is "OT1: SC1 Grantee met their target for community priority activity." No outcome, however, is selected for the activity.

### Recruitment and Development

#### 1. Recruitment and Marketing

Older adults want to remain active in meaningful ways that make a difference, using their life experience and knowledge. These potential volunteers want to build new skills, interact with people, and assume leadership roles in their communities. RSVP is the premier venue for adults age 55+ to

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remain vibrant and connected through service.

Characteristic of many rural communities, there is no single, dominant communications medium in the counties of Huron, Sanilac, and Tuscola. Subsequently, all communications vehicles, including social media, must be used to maximize the number of persons reached for the most cost-effective dollar. Nonprofit agencies like HDC must also apply measures that stimulate "word-of-mouth" advertising, which is still the most effective form of marketing in rural communities. "Word-of-mouth" advertising is highly influential, as people believe what their family, friends, and neighbors say about an agency, a service/program, or a staff person. Moreover, they remember what was said for a very long time.

HDC will use three outreach strategies to build public awareness/support and volunteer engagement for RSVP foci. The first strategy, Mass Media Outreach, gets the message out to the community.

Specific activities include:

- a. Paid advertisements and/or press releases in the county newspaper of record, smaller hometown publications, and newspapers targeting a senior readership.
- b. Paid advertisements and/or public service announcements on radio stations that broadcast locally and participation in live/recorded interviews on local radio stations.
- c. Feature articles in agency publications (e.g., HDC Communicator [an internal agency newsletter], HDC annual report, etc.).
- d. Direct mail that highlights selected services and issues a "Call to Action" (e.g., Love working with children? Call today to learn how to become a Homework Hero.).
- e. Public service events that promote the agency, its services, and its customers (e.g., food drive to collect donations for holiday food baskets for low-income households).

The second strategy, Personal Outreach, gets the message out to potential customers, their family and friends, and agencies and business/civic groups that have regular contact with potential volunteers.

Specific activities include:

- a. Production of an easy-to-understand, all-purpose program brochure that is available to county residents. The brochure may be used as a distribution piece and as a "leave behind" piece after a presentation.
- b. Use of display posters/display booths at senior health fairs, local festivals, and other community

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events that are of interest to and attended by older adults.

c. Direct mailing to human service agencies, nonprofit organizations (including faith-based), for profit businesses, and other civic groups that have regular contact with adults age 55+ and are likely to know someone who may benefit from RSVP.

d. Presentations to human service agencies, nonprofit organizations (including faith-based), for profit businesses, and other civic groups that have regular contact with adults age 55+ and are likely to know someone who may benefit from RSVP.

e. Information & Referral assistance through HDC's toll-free line and other I & R vendors (e.g., Northeast Michigan 211).

The third strategy, Social Media Outreach, gets the message out to potential volunteers via HDC's website and Facebook. According to Kinseis, a Portland, Oregon web design/branding firm, the number of seniors using the Internet grew by 55% between 2004 and 2009 (the largest percentage of increase was among the 70-75 age group). Likewise, according to the Pew Research Center's 2012 Internet and American Life Project, more than half of adults age 65+ are online, and 70% use the Internet daily. Seven in ten adults age 65+ own a cell phone, and one in three visit social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn.

RSVP opportunities are posted under the Employment tab of the agency's website to recruit new volunteers. Photos from RSVP community projects/fundraising events are also posted to HDC's Facebook account to create a visual accolade of community engagement and impact.

Niche marketing is essential to engage the newest RSVP recruits--the baby boomers. Born between 1946 and 1964, baby boomers are 78 million strong nationally and there are over 21,000 boomers in the RSVP catchment area, creating unlimited potential for recruitment. Boomers seek volunteer opportunities as a means to remain active, share wisdom, and pursue new interests. They are motivated by social issues, technology, and flexibility. Boomers focus on quality rather than quantity, and they want to see the impact of their efforts, not merely be recognized for hours of service. Recruitment materials must include testimonials from other boomers, as they accept messages from peers more readily than from corporate officials. The rewards of volunteering--meeting like-minded people, mental/emotional fitness, and physical well-being--are important incentives to attract boomers.

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"Affirmation of personal worth" is critical, incorporating values like respect and independence in marketing messages. Beyond traditional print media, using social media like Facebook is essential to recruit these "forever young" seniors. According to a 2009 Pew Research survey, the typical boomer believes that "old age" does not even begin until age 72. Marketing efforts need to focus on a volunteer's cognitive age, i.e., the way one "feels", and not their actual chronological age, in both print and online media.

### **2. Orientation, Training, and Supervision**

Orientation for new RSVP volunteers is a shared responsibility between HDC as the sponsor agency and the volunteer station. When someone expresses interest in becoming a volunteer, staff provides a one-to-one orientation on HDC and RSVP as a premier volunteer project for adults age 55+. The volunteer manual explains how the program operates, focus areas and opportunities, station locations, and benefits of volunteering (insurance, travel reimbursement, meals, etc.). Time reporting is also reviewed with potential recruits.

RSVP stations offer a site orientation and relevant training for volunteers on project goals, site policies, individual responsibilities, and other information needed to ensure mutual satisfaction. Supervision of volunteers is the station's responsibility with input from RSVP staff. New and established stations receive continuing suggestions on working with volunteers, including personal consults, written materials, and recommended media/Internet resources.

The training and supervision of volunteers by station personnel is outlined and monitored according to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that is executed between HDC's RSVP project and participating stations. Signed by both parties, the MOU describes program requirements, working relationships, and mutual responsibilities. It also identifies the designated supervisor and the type of training to be provided by the participating station. The MOU includes general conditions applicable to all projects and stations as well as special conditions applicable to a given station. MOUs are reviewed and renegotiated every three years, and, as circumstances dictate, the MOU may be amended at any time.

### **3. Building an Inclusive Volunteer Pool**

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The gender, racial, and ethnic composition of the RSVP catchment area counties is very homogeneous. The male-to-female ratio in each county is nearly indistinguishable with Huron County reporting its residents as 49.6% male to 50.4% female, Sanilac County with 49.4% male to 50.6% female, and Tuscola County with 50.1% male to 49.9% female.

Approximately 95% of all residents in the service area report their race as Non-Hispanic White, specifically 96.1% in Huron County, 94.8% in Sanilac County, and 94.3% in Tuscola County. The second largest cultural group (one race) fluctuates among the counties with Huron County reporting Non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Isle (0.5%), Sanilac County with Non-Hispanic American Indian (0.4%), and Tuscola County with Non-Hispanic Black (1.1%). Only 2.8% of the total population report their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino [2010 U.S. Census].

The frequency of English as a second language, veteran status, and adults with disabilities is also uniform across the RSVP service area. The principal language for most residents is English, and English is the language spoken at home for 96.7% of residents age five and over. While the remaining 3.3% of the population speak a language other than English at home, less than one percent (0.9%) of the total population age five and over does not speak English well.

Veterans played an important role in shaping the freedom of this nation, and they can play another important role as RSVP volunteers who shape learning opportunities for young children or end-of-life independence for the frail elderly. Using 2010 U.S. Census data, the VA Administration reports more than 11,000 veterans reside in the RSVP service area (2,969 in Huron, 3,576 in Sanilac, and 4,808 in Tuscola). Vietnam era veterans (many of whom are boomers) are the largest veteran group in each county, followed by World War II and Korean War veterans in Huron, Korean War and World War II veterans in Sanilac, and Golf War (August 1990-August 2001) and Korean War veterans in Tuscola. The majority of veterans are male (95%) and are between 55 and 64 years of age.

There are nearly 3,000 adults age 65 and over in each of the three counties that struggle with a disability, and these disabled adults represent approximately one in every four seniors. The U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates, 2009-2011 provides data on six types of disabilities. A brief description of each disability, including the number of seniors with an identified disability, is shown below. (Respondents were able to report having more than one type of

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disability, for example, having ambulatory and self-care difficulties.)

a. Hearing difficulty for adults age 65+

1) Definition: A long-lasting condition involving deafness or a severe hearing impairment

2) Number: Huron County -- 1,243; Sanilac County -- 1,292; Tuscola County -- 1,417

b. Vision difficulty for adults age 65+

1) Definition: A long-lasting condition involving blindness or a severe vision impairment

2) Number: Huron County -- 441; Sanilac County -- 460; Tuscola County -- 553

c. Cognitive difficulty for adults age 65+

1) Definition: A condition lasting 6+ months that makes it difficult to perform certain activities -- learning, remembering, or concentrating

2) Number: Huron County -- 698; Sanilac County -- 688; Tuscola County -- 608

d. Ambulatory difficulty for adults age 65+

1) Definition: A long-lasting condition that limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing, lifting, or carrying

2) Number: Huron County -- 1,723; Sanilac County -- 1,873; Tuscola County -- 2,001

e. Self-care difficulty for adults age 65+

1) Definition: A condition lasting 6+ months that makes it difficult to perform certain activities -- dressing, bathing, or getting around

2) Number: Huron County -- 503; Sanilac County -- 582; Tuscola County -- 680

f. Independent Living difficulty for adults age 65+

1) Definition: A condition lasting 6+ months that makes it difficult to perform certain activities -- going out alone to visit a doctor's office

2) Number: Huron County -- 1,006; Sanilac County -- 1,136; Tuscola County -- 1,185

At present, the RSVP Volunteer Information System (VIS) can create a demographic profile that includes age, gender, race, and ethnicity. English as second language and disability status are not tracked by VIS, and veteran status has only been tracked for one year. Over the next three years,

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HDC will work to build an RSVP volunteer pool that is more reflective of the catchment area's demographic profile. While the agency does not anticipate having an equal number of male and female volunteers, upcoming marketing efforts will target men age 55+ (especially boomers) to increase this indicator. This effort will also help to increase the number of veteran volunteers as men represent a substantial percentage of all veterans. The racial and ethnic composition of RSVP volunteers will continue to mirror the service area whereas information on English as second language and disability will be tracked in the future.

### 4. Retention & Recognition

RSVP staff works tirelessly to build and retain a resilient corps of volunteers, using strategic recruitment and placement strategies, diligent retention efforts, and heartfelt recognition events. An important factor influencing retention is recognizing the human and monetary value of volunteers' contributions. HDC uses many approaches to recognize RSVP volunteers such as:

- a. Pictorial displays at fairs and other events
- b. Articles in county newspapers of record and smaller hometown publications
- c. Nominations for State and local recognitions
- d. RSVP logo gifts that offer a sense of belonging
- e. Notes of gratitude from staff and volunteer stations
- f. Opportunities to develop/practice leadership skills like serving on advisory councils
- g. Social gatherings like annual picnics where volunteers are recognized by their peers

### Program Management

High quality program management is an HDC trademark. Since the start of the Foster Grandparent Program in 1978, HDC has publicized the value of older adults and their volunteer contributions. The launch of RSVP in 2001 (Tuscola) and 2002 (Huron and Sanilac) allowed the agency to expand its volunteer base to include older adults that were not economically disadvantaged. Whether working on skill building with at-risk youth or delivering meals and smiles to the homebound elderly, volunteering is a life-changing experience. Ensuring placements remain meaningful to volunteers and instrumental to community health requires ongoing input from partners as well as programmatic flexibility to respond quickly to changing needs and challenges.

Volunteer stations are located throughout the catchment area, primarily in the county seats of Bad

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Axe (Huron), Sandusky (Sanilac), and Caro (Tuscola). Stations are selected on the ability to develop assignments in CNCS focus areas. Well-informed staff offers guidance on developing assignments and managing older adults. Staff maintains contact with stations via site visits, telephone, email, and newsletters. Staff also meets individually with interested volunteers to review available placements and help with assignment selection. Active volunteers are contacted in person, by telephone/email, and by newsletter. These communication methods contribute to both volunteer and station satisfaction while troubleshooting potential obstacles.

Assessment of project performance occurs via regular reporting by volunteers, volunteer stations, community partners, data collection, and staff observations. RSVP uses this information to keep the community apprised of volunteer contributions and needs being addressed. RSVP staff also meets regularly to review progress towards the achievement of program goals and objectives, celebrating successes, and implementing modifications when needed. The program manager reports monthly to the HDC Community Services Advisory Council that, in turn, provides input for building public awareness and support. In addition, RSVP staff conducts an annual self-assessment to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

The evaluation of RSVP by volunteers, stations, partners, advisory council members, and staff provides occasions to reflect on what is working/not working. Identifying service gaps allows for improved program management, including the creation of new volunteer opportunities. It also allows for the suspension of opportunities that are less than effective.

RSVP data collection is maintained within databases created by the sponsor and/or the funding sources. The databases collect pertinent information, including demographic characteristics and service records. The databases also contain station information, including community issues being addressed and service categories of volunteer assignments.

HDC's fiscal department manages RSVP project resources, both financial and in-kind contributions. The program manager submits paperwork detailing receipts for revenues and expenses as well as in-kind donations. HDC's fiscal department assigns these resources to approved budget categories, which allows the program manager to monitor the project's financial stability and sustainability.

## Narratives

Securing local cash and in-kind support is the responsibility of the program manager and staff. When Memoranda of Understanding are underwritten, both established and new volunteer stations are encouraged to provide project support such as cash contributions, meals and travel assistance for volunteers, and supplies and other materials used during volunteer assignments, including recognition keepsakes. Project staff requests donations like column space from local newspapers for program recruitment and volunteer recognition activities. RSVP staff and volunteers host local fundraising events like adult spelling bees and quilt raffles to increase cash donations. (No federal dollars are used to support staff time for fundraising activities.) Financial support is received via an RSVP grant from the State of Michigan; however, no local financial support is available from United Way agencies, Area Agencies on Aging, or senior millage.

### Organizational Capability

In January 2014, HDC will celebrate 49 years of service to the low income, disabled, and elderly. With decades of service experience that includes volunteer management and an annual budget in excess of \$10M, the agency assures it has the capacity to provide adequate facilities, equipment, purchasing procedures, and personnel management support with clearly defined roles for staff and administrators plus internal policies (including a travel policy). In addition, the agency has measured program success via an outcomes framework for more than a decade.

#### 1. Administrative/Management Capacity

Key staff for RSVP program administration include Lori K. Offenbecher, Executive Director, whose principal responsibilities include developing, prioritizing and evaluating agency goals, service plans, and program operations; Maryanne Eagle, Internal Services Director, who prepares monthly, quarterly and year-end reports for more than 100 funding sources; and Rebecca Hassler, Program Development Director, who provides administrative/supervisory oversight for RSVP.

Julia DeGuise, FGP/RSVP Manager, provides the daily leadership and supervision essential for successful program management and service delivery by dedicated, effective staff. Ms. DeGuise earned a Bachelor of Sociology from Saginaw Valley State College. She has been involved with FGP since 1999 and RSVP since 2001. Her principal responsibilities include:

- Interacting with all RSVP primary and secondary funding sources
- Advocating for older adults throughout the RSVP catchment area and at the state level

## Narratives

- Providing supervision, training, and support for staff
- Communicating with volunteers, station supervisors, and Advisory Council members
- Using an outcomes framework to report results with volunteers and the community
- Integrating RSVP services with other HDC programming efforts
- Promoting RSVP through community presentations and involvement in the community

Dedicated, caring RSVP staff provides high quality services for adults age 55+. Teresa Whitaker, FGP/RSVP Program Assistant, helps the program manager ensure overall accountability, quality, and continuity of service for enrolled volunteers. Ms. Whitaker earned an Associate in Accounting from Great Lakes College, and she has been involved with RSVP since 2001. In addition, a part-time RSVP Assistant, Cheryl Fuerst, has been involved with the project since 2007. Principal responsibilities for Ms. Whitaker and Ms. Fuerst include:

- Communicating with volunteer stations via telephone, email, and site visits
- Recruiting, interviewing, orienting, training, placing, and monitoring volunteer placements
- Coordinating other assistance needed by volunteers (e.g., food, housing repair, utilities, etc.)
- Collecting data for outcomes reporting

### 2. Financial Capacity

HDC's financial success is due, in part, to diversified funding resources. Federal grantors include the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Energy, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor as well as CNCS. The agency has extensive experience in managing Federal funds. Of the \$14,574,460 mobilized in FY 2012, 62% (\$9,036,003) was from Federal resources.

HDC's Internal Services Director maintains a sound accounting system with no disallowed costs. The director supervises five accounting professionals, each trained in the use of accounting software Sage ACCPAC 2000 ERP, which is fully networked and integrated. HDC adheres to a cost allocation system for the allocation of administrative and indirect costs, a requisition and purchase order system, and employs internal controls with a segregation of duties. Annually, the Board of Directors approves a Financial/Business Procedures Manual that describes fiscal management and accounting systems such as check issuance, check signing, purchase authorization, account reconciliation, petty cash, and collection and deposit of revenue, including program income.

## Narratives

### 3. Volunteer Management Capacity

Volunteers are integral to HDC's service delivery and programming success. The hours contributed by all agency volunteers in FY 2012 were equivalent to 63.4 full-time jobs with a financial impact of \$976,985, of which \$100,203 was from RSVP. Volunteers deliver nutritious meals to the homebound elderly, reassuring frail seniors that someone cares. Volunteers serve in leadership positions on boards and councils, provide one-to-one tutoring for children with special needs, and distribute food commodities bimonthly to those vulnerable to malnutrition. Simply said, volunteers are love in motion.

As highlighted throughout the application, HDC has extensive experience in managing volunteer programs, including recruiting, screening, placing, training, and supervising volunteers. Annually, nearly 700 volunteers (across the entire agency, not just RSVP) are recruited and screened for opportunities at HDC and in the community. Volunteers are evaluated and matched to positions complementing their skill sets and interests. This process creates greater satisfaction for both volunteers and stations, thereby minimizing turnover, improving service delivery, and enhancing program outcomes. No volunteer station in the three counties has had to be responsibly graduated because the station was unable or unwilling to address community needs. If this were to happen in the future, RSVP staff has maintained excellent communications with stations using site visits, telephone calls, and email to stay connected. Whenever possible, a volunteer station would be involved in the decision to suspend RSVP activities. Volunteers serving at a potentially graduating station would be provided other service opportunities through other RSVP stations, or may continue to serve as a non-RSVP volunteer.

HDC administers over 70 community service programs that celebrate the lifespan, from infants and toddlers to the frail elderly. Many programs depend on volunteers for quality service delivery.

Examples of programs relying on volunteers in FY 2012 include:

- a. Home Delivered Meals (1975-Present): Volunteers deliver meals to the frail, homebound elderly [12,707 volunteer hours]
- b. Foster Grandparent Program (1978-Present): Volunteers encourage children with special needs to achieve greater academic and social successes [37,694 volunteer hours]

## Narratives

c. Thumb Area Assault Crisis Center (1986-Present): Volunteers answer a 24-hour crisis line and offer emotional support to victims of domestic violence [862 volunteer hours].

### Other

N/A

### PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A