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Executive Summary

Monadnock RSVP is sponsored by Monadnock Family Services (MFS), a community mental health center serving southwestern New Hampshire. Our mission is to foster mental and emotional health, promote recovery from mental illness, inspire hope for personal success, be a source of health and hope for people and the communities in which they live, foster mental and emotional health for individuals of all ages, and create services that heal, education that transforms, and advocacy that brings a just society. We are a Monadnock United Way Agency. With 227 employees, our 108-year-old organization serves children and youth with emotional and behavioral disturbances and adults through counseling and support services. MFS offers 20 distinct programs in parent education, youth development, family support, eldercare, substance abuse prevention and treatment, and group and individual treatment for persons with mental illness.

Monadnock RSVP has been at the forefront of meeting critical needs through volunteer service, as well as providing meaningful opportunities to adults 55 and older since 1974. We are requesting \$79,413 to support the work of our 300 volunteers. The required 30% match of \$39,764 will be provided by the Monadnock United Way and through supplemental grants, fundraising and in-kind contributions.

In both Monadnock United Way's and Monadnock Community Hospital's 2012 Needs Assessments, declining economic opportunity, low educational attainment, child welfare and transportation were identified as priority needs. The primary focus area of this project will be education, in which RSVP volunteers will engage with children in K-12 and in early childhood education programs to improve school readiness and literacy skills. Other areas we will address are: healthy futures, veterans and military family members, disaster services and capacity building. Volunteers will provide socialization and support to economically disadvantaged, elderly adults with physical or emotional disabilities, veterans and military families so they have increased social support to remain in their homes, access to health care, food security and housing. Fifty-seven percent of our RSVP volunteers will be working on results tied to outcomes.

Monadnock RSVP has broad, lasting effects on a wide range of people documented by performance measures and surveys from agencies, volunteers and program recipients. We remain the only organization in the area that provides individualized volunteer management services for volunteers

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and agencies. We are also the only program that provides screened, trained volunteers to the schools to tutor children and independent living services free of charge. Through our partner agencies and programs, community members who are the most vulnerable and at-risk receive the support and assistance they need to meet their basic human needs, increase their ability to succeed in their personal goals and have a quality of life that spans generationally with the help of RSVP volunteers.

Strengthening Communities

Describe the community and demonstrate that the community need(s) identified in the Primary Focus exist in the geographic service area.

The Monadnock Region is located in Southwestern NH and covers an area of 1,021 miles. It includes 32 towns on both sides of Mount Monadnock and in two counties (Cheshire and Western Hillsborough), with towns on the borders of Massachusetts and Vermont. Of the 32 towns, 11 are within Hillsborough County and 21 are within Cheshire County. There is one city (23,409 pop.) and 31 towns ranging from 229 to 7,230 inhabitants.

Current Census data shows migration out of the area among individuals age 18-45. The fastest growing population is senior citizens, of which there are 18,072 adults over age 55 in this region. Ninety-five percent of the population is White, 1.05% Black or African American, 0.34% American Indian and Alaskan Native, and 1.67% Asian. In the 65+ age group, 6.8% report a physical or mental disability within the past 6 months or more which impairs their ability to complete activities of daily living. The veteran population over age 18 is 7,722 in Cheshire County and 30,434 in Hillsborough County.

Due to the rural nature and low density of the region there is a shortage of public transportation, interstate and rail systems. Average commute time to work is 21.2 minutes and 24% of residents work outside the county. The unemployment rate in Cheshire County is 4.9% and 5.6% in Hillsborough County. The region is below average in income for a "livable" wage (\$18 per hour).

There is an array of public and private schools, three higher educational institutions, two hospitals and a VA Counseling and Medical Center. Public organizations, municipal and social services, congregations of faith, arts/cultural and recreational opportunities vary in size and scope from town to town. Rural communities have far fewer resources and may rely upon neighboring towns for support.

The Monadnock Region has three School Administrative Units (SAUs). SAU #29 is comprised of seven independent school districts (Chesterfield, Harrisville, Keene, Marlborough, Marlow, Nelson & Westmoreland) and is the largest multi-district SAU in the state; SAU #1 Contoocook Valley Regional

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School District; and SAU #47 Jaffrey-Rindge Cooperative School District.

The NH Department of Education identifies Districts In Need of Improvement (DINI). To miss Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as a district, the district must miss AYP in the same content area at each level (elementary/middle and/or secondary). To be designated a district in need of improvement (DINI), a district must miss AYP in the same content area two consecutive years. To make Adequate Yearly Progress in a content area, only ONE level needs to make AYP in that content area. To remove the designation as a DINI, the district must make AYP for two consecutive years in the area that resulted in the DINI designation.

During the 2011-2012 school year, the following SAUs have been identified as Districts In Need of Improvement: Chesterfield advances to DINI year 2 -- reading; Contoocook Valley is a new DINI in year 1 -- reading; Jaffrey-Rindge advances to DINI year 2- reading; and Keene, Marlborough and Winchester missed AYP -- reading;

According to the Monadnock United Ways's report, "Community Well-being in the Monadnock Region", graduation levels are lower than some rural areas in the state; proficiency in reading is low; and teacher educational attainment is lower. New England Common Assessment Program scores for 2011-2012 indicate that 22-25% of students entering the 4th grade in this region have reading scores below grade level proficiency. Census data puts college attainment rate of young adults, age 25-34, at 40.1 percent.

Education will be this project's primary focus area. Since 1998 Monadnock RSVP has administered an America Reads program in grades K-3 to help children achieve grade level reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade. Under the guidance of the teacher or reading specialist, volunteers are matched one-to-one with students or in small groups to practice reading and writing for an hour weekly throughout the school year. Survey results from teachers in 2012 demonstrated 93% of students tutored increased their interest in reading and 94% had improved reading skills. We will be expanding America Reads to improve school readiness in terms of literacy skills to economically disadvantaged children in Head Start.

RSVP's America Reads program has been and continues to be the only program in the region that provides screened, trained volunteers to the schools to tutor children. Beginning with three schools, this program currently serves ten, seven of which are Title I schools which mean that the children are from very low-income families and receive free lunch. The schools value the presence of RSVP volunteers who have the life experience to be positive role models and give the individualized attention and encouragement to children falling behind without putting increased demand on teachers' time

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and resources. In fall 2012, our recruitment efforts exceeded expectations with 23 new volunteers. Education is one of the social determinants of health. Healthy Monadnock 2020, a community-wide health initiative of Cheshire Medical Center designed to actively engage the citizens of Cheshire County in the process of becoming the nation's healthiest community by the year 2020, and the Monadnock United Way are spearheading Collective Impact initiatives in our region. Collective Impact describes the commitment of a group of people from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a complex social problem. In order to create lasting solutions, like improving educational outcomes on a large-scale, organizations and individuals need to coordinate their efforts and work together around a clearly defined goal and shared measurement. RSVP has been identified as an effective partner and leader because of our demonstrated success with America Reads, data collection and performance measurement. This makes us an invaluable resource as common goals, shared measurement and mutually reinforcing activities are developed region-wide.

Describe how the service activities in the Primary Focus Area lead to National Performance measures or outcomes:

Volunteer screening and training is a critical component of the America Reads program. Each new volunteer must satisfactorily complete the following: extensive interview, criminal background, and three references. They are given a comprehensive training manual and receive four hours of training by a professional reading specialist, a retired teacher and RSVP staff on: how children learn to read and write and the stages of development, activities and strategies to use during a tutoring session, Code of Conduct in the school and classroom, safety procedures and administrative details. They will also be provided two in-service trainings of two hours each by similar professionals. Volunteers will have pre-service orientation on-site. Head Start will provide additional training with staff on appropriate classroom practices and language, positive discipline, Head Start philosophy, and planning for individual children assigned. Books, games, and materials will be provided by Head Start. In grades K -- 3, reading materials and supervision will be provided by the teacher.

ED24: Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of literacy skills

Emergent literacy is the precursory knowledge about reading and writing that children acquire prior to conventional literacy instruction and that they bring to the task of learning to read. For most children, the bulk of this knowledge is acquired within the preschool years. RSVP America Reads volunteers will engage with Head Start students 1-to-1 or in small group activities that will include: reading and telling stories, poems, nursery rhymes; handling books and using paper, crayons and markers; playing language and phonetic games; singing and finger plays.

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Three promising evidence-based interventions will be used with Head Start students. Adult--child shared storybook reading has featured prominently in a number of recent studies investigating effective strategies for promoting oral language and emergent literacy in young children at risk. Shared storybook reading is viewed as particularly powerful because it provides an interactive context that is contextualized, authentic, meaningful, interesting, and motivating to the preschool child. A substantial research base has indicated the likely benefits of dialogic reading for supporting young children's oral language and emergent literacy achievements. When reading books with children, volunteers integrate a set of behaviors into their reading interactions: (a) asking open-ended questions and limiting use of yes/no questions; (b) following children's answers with additional questions; (c) repeating and expanding on what children say; (d) offering praise, encouragement, and feedback for children's participation; and (e) following children's interests. These behaviors are designed to increase children's engagement and active participation--that is, to create a dialogue--and to provide adult models of language targets.

Like dialogic reading, print referencing makes use of the adult--child shared storybook reading context in a way that maximizes children's learning opportunities. With print referencing, the volunteer incorporates verbal and nonverbal references to print into the book-reading routine to encourage a child's explicit and implicit interactions with and attention to oral and written language. Verbal behaviors include questions about print (e.g., "Where should I start reading on this page?"), comments about print (e.g., "We know this letter--it's an A!"), and requests concerning print (e.g., "Point to the dog's words"). Nonverbal behaviors include pointing to print and tracking the print when reading. Studies have shown that adult use of print referencing over relatively brief periods resulted in substantial increases in children's print awareness, word concepts, and alphabet knowledge.

ED5: Number of students with improved academic performance in literacy.

Under the guidance of the teacher or reading specialist, America Reads volunteers will be matched one-to-one with students or in small groups to practice reading and writing for an hour weekly throughout the school year. According to the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, there is strong evidence that teaching reading comprehension strategies to primary grade students has positive effects on comprehension when measured by standardized tests and researcher-created measures. Good readers use many forms of thinking and analyzing text as they read. It is therefore important to teach beginning readers strategies for constructing meaning from text. Comprehension strategies help readers enhance their understanding, overcome difficulties in comprehending text, and compensate for weak or imperfect knowledge related to the text. RSVP

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America Reads volunteers will use these effective comprehension strategies during their tutoring sessions: Activating prior knowledge/predicting, questioning, visualizing, monitoring/clarifying, drawing inferences and summarizing/re-telling.

Your plan and infrastructure to support data collection and ensure National Performance Measures are measured, collected and managed.

Monadnock RSVP incorporates local input into program design and evaluation. Our RSVP has a Community Participation Group (CPG) comprised of non-profit leaders who represent the CNCS primary focus areas, businesses and faith-based organizations. CPG meets quarterly to support this project with ideas, guidance, strategic planning and feedback about community needs and impact. This group completed the Community Stakeholder Survey and a SWOT analysis which was revisited in 2012 to evaluate change and to prioritize action steps. The CPG has played a key role in identifying and establishing new partnerships with organizations and programs to meet new CNCS performance measures.

The Monadnock United Way report, Community Well-Being in the Monadnock Region, identified needs we will tie in with education, healthy futures and economic opportunity. They have instituted a collective impact model to identify a common community agenda and culture of measurement and accountability which will require RSVP to submit grants and progress reports with performance measurements into their e-C Impact management software. The MUW Allocations Committee evaluates our programs annually to ensure that we meet critical needs without duplicating services and that the funding provided is used appropriately. The process begins with a three-person site visit for an in-depth review, which then makes recommendations to the 22-person team who read proposals, listen to presentations and decide on funding.

RSVP works closely with stations to develop meaningful volunteer opportunities with measureable impact and to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Stations report monthly to RSVP on volunteer hours, number of clients served and in-kind contributions based on volunteer timesheets, transportation logs and tracking databases. This information is entered into our volunteer management software, the Volunteer Reporter, which tracks unduplicated volunteers and can produce customized reports.

Prior to developing work plans, we met with supervisors to identify needs that align with the performance measures, review current programmatic data, develop service activities, determine measurement tools and methods/time frames for administering and reporting results. We also survey stations annually to assess their satisfaction with our services, effectiveness of our volunteer training

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and management practices. This guides us in our operations as it pertains to the changing climates of non-profits and the programs most needed to make lasting, long-term change in our community.

To measure ED5: Number of students with improved academic performance in literacy, each school uses the following: Pre-assessments that gauge the learners' prior knowledge, skill, or understanding before initial instruction occurs. An example of this would be a teacher-created quiz. The information helps teachers understand who has already mastered the learning target; NWEA MAP (Measures of Academic Progress): Students are provided a "goal sheet" listing their fall score and a target score to reach by the end of the school year. Lexile scores, a 150-point spread showing how challenging a book, text, or other reading materials should be, are used to create reading groups and match students with texts that are at an appropriate level to provide optimal growth for reading. Teachers and grade-levels are provided data to target student strengths and weaknesses. NECAP (New England Common Assessment Program): Students are assessed on a common set of grade-level expectations for reading in the fall. Individual student results are provided to parents in spring. Teachers will report on the improvement of student's literacy skills based upon assessments compared to results from the beginning of the year.

For ED24: Number of children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of literacy skills, Southwestern Community Services uses "Work Sampling for Head Start Developmental Guidelines" which is also known as "Curriculum Imbedded Assessment" for assessing children three times a year in the fall, winter and spring in the required 11 domains, domain elements and domain indicators.

H9: Number of homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities who report having increased social ties/perceived support will be measured by a survey at end of year completed by homebound, older adults, individuals with disabilities or a family member or case manager for those who cannot respond to the survey themselves. RSVP volunteers who serve in Neighbors-In-Deed will assist their care recipients with surveys to assure that they are completed. This information will be entered into Survey Monkey, an online survey tool, which allows us to easily and accurately tabulate, analyze and retrieve results. It offers a function to manually input data. Hard copies will be retained in the RSVP office.

H12: Number of individuals that reported increased food security will be measured by client surveys after six months of services using a standard 6-item indicator set from the U.S. Household Standard Food-Security/Hunger 12-month Food Security Scale Module by the United States Department of Agriculture. Additional questions will be asked to determine the change in food security as a result of services. RSVP volunteers and station staff will administer the surveys, collect them and information

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will be entered into Survey Monkey. Stations will provide hard copies of surveys to RSVP and may document results in their record-keeping systems.

Describe any service activity in service to veterans and/or military families as part of service in the Primary Focus Area, Other Focus Areas or Capacity building.

Monadnock RSVP received a CNCS Augmentation Grant in fall 2012 to expand our independent living program, Neighbors-In-Deed, to provide companionship, medical transportation, shopping assistance and complete home repairs to veterans and military family members. We are also providing drivers to our local Red Cross Chapter to increase their capacity to meet transportation requests to local and long-distance medical appointments at VA hospitals and for basic human needs.

The premise of matching RSVP veteran volunteers to other veterans is that their shared experience and military culture would give the relationship the best chance of success. In the first six months we recruited eight new RSVP veteran volunteers. This has broadened the scope of services available in our region, particularly in rural areas where services are limited or non-existent. In doing so, veterans receive services in their local communities and have increased social support.

Monadnock RSVP currently has 19 RSVP veteran volunteers serving in the community in America Reads, Neighbors-In-Deed, driving for Red Cross and working at blood drives. For Re-competition we will be expanding the America Reads program to three Head Start programs to help economically disadvantaged children achieve school readiness in terms of literacy skills. They have begun to track the number of children of military families.

RSVP conducted a National Day of Service event on September 11, 2013 to complete one-day, home-based projects throughout the Monadnock Region for veterans and military families. At the time of this grant submission, we had ten households and 22 RSVP veteran volunteers to complete minor home repairs, stain siding, replace decking, wash windows, landscape cleanup, ramp building and firewood stacking. RSVP veteran volunteers are taking on leadership roles and helping us with recruitment and referring veterans for help.

Recruitment and Development

Demonstrate a plan and infrastructure to create well-developed high quality volunteer assignments with opportunities to share experiences, abilities and skills to improve their communities and themselves through service in their communities.

Monadnock RSVP incorporates local input into program design to develop high quality volunteer assignments. Our RSVP Community Participation Group (CPG), comprised of non-profit leaders who represent the CNCS primary focus areas, businesses, and faith-based organizations, has met

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quarterly to support this project with ideas, guidance, strategic planning and feedback about community needs and impact. This group completed the Community Stakeholder Survey and a SWOT analysis, which was re-visited in 2012 to evaluate change and to prioritize action steps. The results validated our efforts in the community. Some of the strengths mentioned in the analysis: an extensive volunteer base, dedicated staff, ability to deliver outcomes and clear mission. CPG has played a key role in identifying and establishing new partnerships with organizations and programs to meet new CNCS performance measures.

The Monadnock United Way Allocations Committee evaluates our programs annually to ensure that we meet critical needs without duplicating services, the programs and collaborations we have in the community, and that the funding provided is used appropriately. The process begins with a site visit by a three-member delegation from the committee for an in-depth review. The delegation then makes recommendations to the 22-person team that read proposals, listen to presentations and decide on funding. We have aligned our service activities in the areas of education, healthy futures and economic opportunity with the needs identified by their Community Well-Being Report in the Monadnock Region.

Prior to creating our work plans, we meet with station supervisors to identify programmatic needs and to develop service activities. In addition to the critical roles needed in their programs, we encourage them to think of innovative ways to use volunteers, particularly those with high-level skills.

Developing and cultivating the leadership of RSVP volunteers is one of the best ways to ensure a high-quality volunteer experience, volunteer-driven program expansion, and sustainable services to the community. Examples of leadership roles are: recruiting and managing volunteers, facilitating trainings, developing project materials, conducting outreach and assisting with performance measurement and data collection.

RSVP surveys our stations annually to assess their satisfaction with our services, new skills volunteers could bring to their programs, and the effectiveness of our volunteer training and management practices. This guides us in our operations as it pertains to the changing climate of non-profits and the programs most needed to make lasting, long-term change in our community. We also provide one-to-one consultation on best practices with coordinators and offer a volunteer coordinator/support group in Peterborough for agencies to discuss volunteer management topics and to network. Here are some of the station comments from RSVP's annual survey:

"We have always had high quality volunteers, well-trained and professional."

"RSVP has been outstanding in meeting requests. The volunteer coordinator visits the site and meets

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clients and always asks pertinent questions. RSVP makes the job easier in an outstanding fashion."
"RSVP is very responsive to needs. Communication is strong even when there is an issue."

RSVP staff conducts extensive interviews with volunteers to learn about their motivation to serve, interests, skills and experience so that we can offer them the right volunteer opportunity. We want to ensure that their skills are used in the best way possible and that their work is meaningful and enjoyable.

Opportunities for volunteers to share their experiences, abilities and skills are essential to ensure they have a high-quality, satisfying experience that meets their expectations. In preparation for Re-competition, we held hour-long focus groups with RSVP volunteers to discuss the new performance measures and focus areas. Our goal was to keep them apprised of the direction in which RSVP is going, learn what kinds of opportunities would interest them, their perception of community needs and whether they are being met, and identify new activities and programs we may not know about. The volunteers were thrilled to be part of the process.

In our annual survey, we asked volunteers in which of the six focus areas they saw themselves working. In many cases, we learned about new interests and matched those volunteers to new or additional assignments. We also queried about what benefits were important to them and were surprised by the highest priorities: newsletters (which mean they want communication and to know about our happenings), program in-services and free educational opportunities (they want to continually learn!)

Here are some of the RSVP comments from the surveys:

"I get to work with young children to help them with learning to read. Children look forward to reading aloud and discussing the stories. To watch the children's skills progress and confidence build until they read independently is magic!"

"A special story for me was helping a mentally disabled woman get from Social Security her checks that were due to her. She had gone months without money and not only did she need to pay overdue bills, but she desperately wanted to buy her children something for Christmas and she needed a new winter coat. Helping her was like a Christmas present for me!"

"When a woman with small children comes into the pantry and feels unhappy about having to ask for help it is very satisfying to be able to give the help she needs, to listen if she needs to tell her story, and to reassure her that we are doing what we're doing in order to help her and others who need to get through difficult times."

RSVP offers a support group for volunteers who serve in our independent living program, Neighbors-

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In-Deed, which can be challenging due to the types of care recipients we serve. It provide a safe place to share experiences; reflect and brainstorm solutions to challenges in their assignments; discuss the impact they make on individuals who are struggling to live independently and how it impacts their own lives. This encourages a feeling of being a part of a larger network with shared goals and that they have support from RSVP staff and from each other.

Demonstrates a plan and infrastructure to ensure RSVP volunteers receive training needed to be highly effective means to addressing identified community needs in the Primary Focus areas, Other Focus Areas and Capacity Building

RSVP works with our volunteer stations on the development of service descriptions (title, duties, skills/experience, supervisor, location, dates/times, length of commitment, benefits) and the delivery of pre-service orientation for RSVP volunteers. Many agencies find that a combination of a formal orientation/training program, hands-on experience and shadowing seasoned volunteers works well. Skill-based training is very attractive to volunteers who want to gain new knowledge, as with disaster services. Some agencies provide volunteer handbooks which provide useful information concerning the organization's mission, policies and procedures.

In our signature programs where volunteers work independently, volunteer training is critical to prepare them for the special populations they will serve and to ensure that their service activities will satisfy national performance measure outcomes. These trainings build new skills, give confidence, and build self-esteem which is evident in the long tenure these volunteers have in our programs.

For America Reads, each new volunteer is provided with a comprehensive training manual and receives four hours of training by a professional reading specialist, a retired teacher and RSVP staff on: how children learn to read and write and the stages of development, activities and strategies during a tutoring session, Code of Conduct in the school and classroom, dynamics of a school environment, safety procedures and administrative details. Head Start will provide additional training with staff on appropriate classroom practices and language, positive discipline, Head Start philosophy, and planning for individual children assigned. They will also be provided two in-service trainings of two hours each by Student Advisory Unit staff and Title I teachers.

In the Neighbors-In-Deed program, volunteers are given a comprehensive training manual and receive four hours of training by RSVP staff, seasoned Neighbors-In-Deed volunteers, and community partners with experience in aging issues such as the Director of the Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services or Nurse Care Coordinator. Topics covered include: aging issues, policies and procedures, communication skills, boundaries, elder abuse, practical exercises with decision making/scenarios and

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community resources. Volunteers who serve as Representative Payees receive training from the Social Security Administration, seasoned volunteers and on-going support is offered by case managers. Program in-service trainings are held throughout the year and provide current and new information to enhance the volunteer's knowledge and teach new skills. Topics vary depending upon the skills, experience and interests of our volunteers. For example, with America Reads, after the Newtown tragedy the Superintendent of the Keene School District, Wayne Woolridge, discussed new safety protocols. Neighbors-In-Deed in-services might cover issues such as Alzheimer's disease, death and dying, family dynamics or depression.

Describe the demographics of the community served and plans to recruit volunteer pool reflective of the community served.

The Monadnock Region has very low diversity. Current census data shows migration out of the area among individuals age 18 to 45. The fastest growing population is senior citizens, of which there are 18,072 adults over age 55 in this region. Ninety-five percent of the population is white, 1.05% black or African American, 0.34% American Indian and Alaskan native, and 1.67% Asian. In the 65+ age group, 6.8% have a physical or mental disability that lasts 6 months or more and impairs their ability to complete activities of daily living. The veteran population over age 18 is 7,722 in Cheshire County and 30,434 in Hillsborough County.

With the expansion of our independent living program to focus on veterans and military families, we held a focus group at the Veterans Counseling Center with veterans from all branches of the military and of various ages. This helped us to understand where to seek RSVP veteran volunteers, special needs and considerations with assignments, and how best to make successful matches. To identify RSVP veterans to serve and veterans in need of assistance, we have been helped in our outreach by the Veteran's Service Organizations, the Vet Counseling and Medical Center, White River Junction VA hospital, several RSVP veteran volunteers, and Home Healthcare Hospice and Community Services' (HCS) "We Honor Vets" program, which is a joint effort of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

RSVP conducted a National Day of Service on September 11, 2013, to complete one-day, home-based projects throughout the Monadnock Region for veterans and military families. We used this event as a recruitment tool to draw RSVP veteran volunteers to serve other veterans, with the hope that some of them would commit to on-going volunteering with veterans or other focus areas. Based on best practices from CNCS, our new activities in disaster services may have great appeal if they can use their certifications or communication skills from the military experience. Rural transportation has

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also had documented success.

Our sponsor is a community mental health center. Research shows that volunteers have less incidence of depression. Many clients are referred to us that are unable to work because of their mental health disabilities, but could volunteer in supportive environments. By matching them to an opportunity to serve in which they can have a positive experience, it can make them feel valued for their contributions, build their self-esteem, reduce isolation and help them increase their social connections.

The best recruiting is done by word of mouth from happy RSVP volunteers and direct, face-to-face communication with prospective volunteers. We conduct various outreach strategies to keep our program visible and reach broad audiences or specific populations with diverse skills and experience. With the new performance measures targeted recruitment will be very important. For instance, we will partner with The Keene Senior Center and senior housing to recruit seniors, and target American Association of University Women (AAUW) and the Retired Teacher's Association for America Reads volunteers. Methods we use are: making presentations to faith-based, civic groups, businesses and other community agencies; participating in community coalitions; advertising through RSVP's website; web-based volunteer recruitment systems including Volunteer Match; our sponsor agency and other community program's newsletters; Letters to the Editor, radio interviews and contacting inactive volunteers.

Demonstrate a plan and infrastructure to retain and recognize RSVP volunteers

According to studies by the Urban Institute, screening potential volunteers to ensure appropriate placement in an organization, orientation and training, management, on-going support, feedback and recognition are critical to the success of a volunteer program and to retain volunteers. Monadnock RSVP employs these best practices and our volunteers are satisfied and want to be engaged, based upon results from our annual survey and documentation of their service activities each month. Recognition is an on-going task for RSVP staff and saying "thank you" genuinely and often goes miles! Recognition is unique to each individual serving and one method does not fit all. RSVP staff works very hard to know volunteers so that we can appreciate them in ways that will be most meaningful to them. Volunteers in signature programs have monthly contact and supervision with staff and volunteer leaders. We also call volunteers on their birthday to express good wishes, thank them and chat about their assignments and/or offer new ones. Program Coordinators send personal notes recognizing their length of tenure with RSVP and praise their accomplishments.

We welcome feedback and suggestions for improvement in our annual volunteer survey. This year

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we asked volunteers what benefits/recognition are important to them. The choices were: discounts at local businesses, recognition events, program in-service education, free educational opportunities, newsletters, mileage reimbursement and other opportunities for them to make suggestions. We had a great return rate of 90 volunteers.

Many volunteers commented that the greatest benefit was the satisfaction of helping others and the enjoyment they get from their assignments. This confirms that the time we spend interviewing and getting to know them to make good matches with assignments is very successful. The highest rated benefit was RSVP newsletters, which tell us volunteers want regular communication and like to be apprised of our happenings. We now do quarterly newsletters in which we recognize outstanding volunteer achievements.

Tied for second, volunteers want program in-service trainings and free educational opportunities. They spoke of the value of getting together and sharing problems, approaches, techniques and experiences. Volunteer trainings are given for America Reads and Neighbors-In-Deed to prepare them for their assignments. We hold several in-service trainings throughout the year for America Reads and Neighbors-In-Deed, in which we have incorporated a luncheon. For Neighbors-In-Deed we also have a summer barbecue for volunteers and their care recipients and offer support groups. We are exploring doing free educational workshops using community partners and RSVP volunteers on topics such as history, science, art, literature and more.

In our America Reads program, many volunteers love the City of Keene's offer of a free library card, especially those who live in small towns. RSVP tutors are recognized by the principals, teachers, students and program coordinator with award certificates and food at an event at the end of the school year.

RSVP works with stations to ensure that volunteers are regularly recognized for their contributions to our delivery of services. It need not be expensive and all our stations incorporate some of the following suggestions:

- *Greet volunteers and acknowledge their presence, interact, know them by name.
- *Say "thank you -- verbal, handwritten notes, birthday cards, or an article in newsletter.
- *Provide regular supervision and performance review. Recognize accomplishments.
- *Promote a good volunteer to a position of greater responsibility.
- *Include the volunteer at appropriate staff meetings and office social events.
- *Welcome feedback and suggestions that might improve the effectiveness of the program. Hold a recognition event with gifts or awards.

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Program Management

Plans and infrastructure to ensure management of volunteer stations in compliance with RSVP program regulations (such as preventing or identifying prohibited activities).

There are many components to develop and manage volunteer stations to ensure compliance with RSVP program regulations. With new and current stations, RSVP meets with the Director and/or the volunteer supervisor to develop volunteer assignments that impact critical human and social needs, and regularly assess those assignments for continued appropriateness. We explain the process of requesting a volunteer; how we make placements based upon a volunteer's abilities to do the job; the necessity of volunteer training, orientation, supervision and recognition; required record-keeping and expectations with performance measure data collection/time frames; how volunteer issues are handled and how we can assist; and sign RSVP's Memo of Understanding.

RSVP's Memorandum of Understanding includes detailed provisions to ensure compliance with program regulations. We sign these with new stations and update them every three years with the supervisor during an on-site visit. It clearly outlines the responsibilities of RSVP and the volunteer station and establishes a basis for a good working relationship and successful volunteer station.

Information is entered into our volunteer management software for tracking. We are able to produce reports which allow us to see when current stations need to be renewed. Volunteers are not placed at new stations until the MOU is signed. In our last CNCS Compliance Visit in 2009 our MOU was reviewed and was compliant with CNCS regulations.

RSVP's Memo of Understanding includes:

- *Station name, street and e-mail addresses, and telephone and fax numbers of the volunteer
- *Name of the primary station staff member responsible for day-to-day supervision of RSVP volunteers
- *Assurance that the station will not discriminate against RSVP volunteers, or in the operation of its program, on the basis of race; color; national origin, including limited English proficiency; sex; age; political affiliation; religion; or on the basis of disability if the volunteer is a qualified individual with a disability.
- *Assurance that the station provides reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities
- *Assurance that a volunteer station is a public or non-profit private organization, whether secular or faith-based, or an eligible proprietary health care agency

The Station agrees to:

1. Work cooperatively with RSVP staff to identify volunteer assignments having measurable impact on the critical needs being addressed by the community.

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2. Make final decisions on acceptance of volunteers
3. Provide a job description, orientation, supervision and in-service training for the volunteer as deemed appropriate.
4. If possible, provide reimbursement if driving is a component of the assignment.
5. Arrange for a meal or snack when the assignment extends through lunch hours.
6. Provide recognition for volunteers placed with the agency.
7. Report in-kind donations on the monthly hours report.
8. Certify that the worksite meets safety requirements by law and is considered safe for volunteers.
9. Will not engage volunteers in religious, sectarian or political activity, instruction or work.
10. Will not utilize volunteers for any service or duty or engage in any activity which would otherwise be performed by an employed worker or which would supplant the hiring of or result in the displacement of employed workers, or impair existing contracts for service.
11. Collect and validate volunteer reports which include the number of hours volunteered, any in-kind meals provided, any mileage and the number of recipients receiving services from the volunteer for submission to RSVP office on a monthly basis.
12. Investigate and report any accidents/injuries involving RSVP volunteers in writing.
13. If meals are provided to volunteers, this portion is completed:
() Contributed meals are FEDERALLY FUNDED under
 _____ Title III of the Older Americans Act
 _____ Other (federal) funding source
() Contributed meals are NOT PROVIDED BY FEDERAL FUNDS. Meals will be provided to RSVP volunteers at a free or reduced rate when volunteering _____ hours per day.

To ensure the safety of volunteers, stations are surveyed annually. Program Coordinators conduct site visits and have regular communication with stations, as well as volunteers, about the service activities volunteers are engaged in and to make sure they receive pre-service orientation and training. We have established risk management policies and procedures and provide appropriate accident, personal liability and, when appropriate, excess automobile liability insurance according to CNCS regulations. Volunteer training is part of prevention and protects the volunteer, clients and the organization. RSVP works with our volunteer stations on the development of service descriptions (title, duties, skills/experience, supervisor, location, dates/times, length of commitment, benefits) and the delivery of pre-service orientation for RSVP volunteers. Many agencies find that a combination of a formal

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orientation and training program, hands-on experience and shadowing seasoned volunteers works well. Some agencies provide volunteer handbooks, which provide useful information concerning the organization's mission and policies/procedures.

In our signature programs where volunteers work independently, volunteer training is critical to prepare them for the special populations they serve and to ensure that their service activities will lead to national performance measure outcomes. These trainings build new skills, give confidence, and build self-esteem which is evident in the long tenure these volunteers have in our programs.

RSVP performs criminal history checks for RSVP volunteer candidates who have contact with children, frail adults, persons with disabilities or other potentially vulnerable individuals in our America Reads and Neighbors-In-Deed programs.

RSVP keeps hard copy and electronic files on stations and volunteers. We use the volunteer management software, the Volunteer Reporter, which allows us to facilitate timely and accurate submission of required reports.

Records on Volunteer Stations contain:

- *A current, signed Memorandum of Understanding
- * A listing by name of the RSVP volunteers placed at the volunteer station by service activity

RSVP volunteer records contain:

- *A signed enrollment form, including name, address, telephone number and date of birth.
- *The name of the volunteer station(s) where the RSVP volunteer is placed
- *A copy of the written assignment description for each volunteer or a notation that the volunteer's assignment description is maintained at the volunteer station. Service descriptions are entered in jobs in the Volunteer Reporter.

Plans and infrastructure to develop and/or oversee volunteer stations to ensure that volunteers are performing their assigned service activities.

RSVP has ongoing communication with our stations to ensure the service activities to which RSVP volunteers are assigned are in compliance with CNCS program regulations. Our monthly hours reports clearly indicate the jobs volunteers are doing. These reports are filled out and signed by the station supervisor. If a volunteer changes roles or is no longer volunteering, the stations notify the RSVP office. Program Coordinators visit the sites at least annually to review and update volunteer needs and service descriptions. For America Reads, the Coordinator visits the schools quarterly. Coordinators also maintain contact with volunteers through emails and calls about their assignments. The Neighbors-In-Deed volunteers have monthly contact with RSVP to report their hours and

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activities.

Plans and infrastructure to meet changing community needs to include minimizing disruption to current volunteers or graduating stations.

RSVP has been preparing for the new performance measure and Re-competition for over a year to minimize any disruption to our stations or volunteers. We have kept stations and volunteers informed of the direction our program is going in through conversations and updates in our newsletters. Many RSVP volunteers who were volunteering minimally and/or in activities that do not fit in our new focus areas, stopped altogether due to age, disability or death. Program Coordinators have contacted those in community priority activities and offered them new opportunities. Our community priority work plan reflects volunteers who remain. We did not have to separate any volunteers from our project. Moving forward we will be doing targeted recruitment and focusing on activities in the six Focus Areas. Stations that did not have placements and have expired MOU's have not been renewed. RSVP will continue to assist past and current stations and new agencies that do not fit the new performance measures by posting their opportunities on our website with the assistance of a RSVP volunteer.

RSVP and the Director of The Keene Senior Center met and discussed transitioning the RSVP knitting program, already reduced in numbers, to them. They were happy to take over the program as they have been the hosts for our collection days, house donations of yarn and have a knitting club. Letters were sent to all the volunteers explaining the change and that further communication would be forthcoming from the Keene Senior Center.

Demonstrates an organizational track record in managing volunteers in the Primary Focus Area, to include if applicable, measuring performance.

Education will be this project's Primary Focus Area. Since 1998, Monadnock RSVP has administered an America Reads program in grades K-3 to help children achieve grade level reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade. Under the guidance of the teacher or reading specialist, volunteers are matched one-to-one with students or in small groups to practice reading and writing for an hour weekly throughout the school year. Survey results from teachers in 2012 demonstrated that 93% of students tutored increased their interest in reading and 94% had improved reading skills. In our CNCS Progress Report in April 2013, America Reads served 621 children instead of the 450 predicted. We will be expanding America Reads to improve school readiness in terms of literacy skills to economically disadvantaged children in Head Start.

RSVP's America Reads program has been and continues to be the only program in the region that

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provides screened, trained volunteers to the schools to tutor children. Beginning with three schools, this program currently serves ten, seven of which are Title I schools, which mean that the children are from very low-income families and receive free lunches. The schools value the presence of RSVP volunteers who have the life experience to be positive role models and give the individualized attention and encouragement to children falling behind without putting increased demand on teachers' time and resources. In fall 2012, our recruitment efforts exceeded expectations with 23 new volunteers. Demonstrates a plan and infrastructure to ensure the project is in compliance with the RSVP federal regulations to include establishing an RSVP Advisory Council, ensuring RSVP volunteers are placed in stations with signed MOUs, and ensuring all volunteers are eligible to serve in RSVP.

The RSVP Community Participation Group (CPG), comprised of non-profit leaders who represent the CNCS primary focus areas, businesses and faith-based organizations, meets quarterly to support this project with ideas to recruit, recognize and retain volunteers; increase community awareness; contribute to short and long-range planning and assist with annual assessments of our project. We keep them informed and solicit their advice on matters affecting project operation.

Extensive interviews are conducted with RSVP volunteers, at which time they fill out a registration sheet that requires their date of birth. We enter this information, along with assignments and service activities, into our volunteer management software for tracking. We perform criminal history checks for RSVP volunteer candidates who have contact with children, frail adults, persons with disabilities or other potentially vulnerable individuals in our America Reads and Neighbors-In-Deed programs.

RSVP sign Memos of Understanding, which identifies prohibited activities, with new stations and update them every three years with the supervisor during an on-site visit. It also includes:

*Assurance that the station will not discriminate against RSVP volunteers, or in the operation of its program, on the basis of race; color; national origin, including limited English proficiency; sex; age; political affiliation; religion; or on the basis of disability

if the volunteer is a qualified individual with a disability.

*Assurance that the station provides reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities

*Assurance that a volunteer station is a public or non-profit private organization, whether secular or faith-based, or an eligible proprietary health care agency

Stations agree to undertake other responsibilities as may be necessary to the successful performance of RSVP volunteers in their assignments such as assisting with transportation, volunteer recognition, and, when possible, meals. Information is entered into our volunteer management software for tracking. We are able to produce reports which allow us to see when current stations need to be

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renewed. Volunteers are not placed at new stations until the MOU is signed.

To ensure the safety of volunteers, stations are surveyed annually. Program Coordinators conduct site visits and have regular communication with stations, as well as volunteers, about the service activities volunteers are engaged in and to make sure they receive pre-service orientation and training. We have established risk management policies and procedures and provide appropriate accident, personal liability and, when appropriate, excess automobile liability insurance according to CNCS regulations.

Organizational Capability

Plans and infrastructure to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight (both financial and in-kind) and day-to-day operational support to ensure compliance with the RSVP program requirements and to ensure accountability and efficient and effective use of available resources.

Programmatic and fiscal oversight to ensure compliance with RSVP requirements is provided by the finance department of our fiscal sponsor, Monadnock Family Services, and closely scrutinized by the Monadnock United Way, which provides our required 30% match. The United Way Allocations Committee evaluates the use of financial resources, the degree to which we utilize local resources, and which agencies we partner with to achieve our goals without duplicating services. The United Way's process begins with a site visit by three committee members for an in-depth review, which then makes recommendations to the 22-person team that read proposals, listen to presentations and decide on funding.

RSVP and MFS staff are familiar with grant regulations, OMB Circulars and Grant Guidelines to ensure compliance. MFS employs "Best Practice Accounting" for all procedures and has an efficient accounting system that:

1. Distinguishes grant-related versus non-grant-related expenditures
2. Identifies costs by budget period
3. Identifies costs by budget category
4. Differentiates between direct and indirect costs (administrative costs)
5. Maintains Federal and required non-Federal share separately
6. Records in-kind contributions as both revenues and expenses
7. Follows Generally Accepted Accounting Principals (GAAP)

The RSVP Director works with the Chief Financial Officer to periodically compare the budget to actual costs and to verify that they are reasonable.

RSVP staff completes time sheets that are kept on file. Time sheets clearly show any time spent on non-grant or unallowable activities, such as fund raising, and this use of time is appropriately

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allocated to other funding sources. We document receipt and valuation of all in-kind contributions counted toward the required non-Federal share of the grant in the Volunteer Reporter. MFS's accounting office records these contributions in Raiser's Edge software. RSVP retains volunteer and station records, data collected and financial records for at least three years from the date we submit the final CNCS Financial Status Report (FSR) for the project period or three years past the last audit, whichever is most recent.

RSVP has proven successful in securing resources, such as cash and in-kind contributions, to sustain and expand the project. Accomplishments during 2012/2013:

* In October RSVP was awarded a grant from the Bishop's Charitable Assistance Fund for operating support for our independent living program, Neighbors-in-Deed.

* The Bean Family Foundation awarded us a \$2,500 grant to enhance our technological infrastructure, which is essential for our growth into rural areas and operational effectiveness.

* The Jerusalem Lodge #104 Charitable Assistance Fund awarded us a \$700 grant to purchase books for students in America Reads to reinforce reading and writing concepts learned over the year, promote the love of reading, and decrease learning loss over the summer.

* Stations provide meals during their assignments.

* Mileage is donated by RSVP volunteers -- 9,300 miles @ \$.45 per mile.

* Community meeting space (4 @ \$75 each) provided by partner agencies (in-kind) and recognition spaces (2 @ \$150 each), all donated by partner agencies.

* A private consultant is offering free consultation for preparation, follow-up and facilitation of CPG meetings. (2 meetings/4 consults @ \$125 hour; mileage: 36 miles x \$.055/mile).

* The local People's United Bank awarded RSVP \$2,500 in August 2013.

* In June, Monadnock United Way allocated \$32,000 for our Federal match for 2014.

With the help of MFS's Development Director and Grant Writer, we continue to explore new funding opportunities.

Demonstrates clearly defined paid staff positions, including identification of current staff assigned to the project and how these positions will ensure the accomplishment of program objectives.

Project Director: The Project Director assumed her current position in June 2012. She has been with RSVP 11 years, of which ten were as a Program Coordinator recruiting, placing, managing and training volunteers; developing community partnerships; assisting with grant writing and performance measurement; and coordinating the independent living program, which doubled in size under her leadership. She has many years of volunteer experience with the elderly. She holds a

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Bachelor of Arts degree in English. The Director is responsible for writing grants and reports, developing, training and supervising new and ongoing programs and staff, and budget management.

Program Coordinators: Cheshire and western Hillsborough Counties:

The Cheshire County Program Coordinator has been working here for 15 years and has strong relationships with our volunteers and stations. Prior to coming to RSVP, she worked in development with a non-profit, overseas, with the Red Cross in Spain and taught school. She has served on multiple Boards of Directors. The coordinator started the America Reads program the first month she began working here and has developed trainings, support groups and in-service trainings for volunteers. This program started with three schools, and now has expanded to ten. This program has a very successful track record of improvement in the students' reading ability as documented by the teacher surveys at the end of the school year.

A new Program Coordinator was hired in April 2012 for the Peterborough office and to coordinate the Neighbors-In-Deed program, with particular attention to its expansion to veterans and military families. He was a 4th Class Specialist in the 101st Airborne Division of the Army. He spent over two decades as a Product Manager, Planner, and Corporate Sales Manager and as a buyer and store manager. He worked for the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests for three years in Outreach, Education and Business Membership Development. He was a Land-use Planner, has extensive volunteer experience and has served on many municipal boards, including a term as selectman, community event committees, and as a firefighter and EMT for 20 years.

Professional development opportunities are offered to staff as funding allows. Staff are encouraged to pursue opportunities in our community that are provided at low or no cost from community partners and to participate in working groups and coalitions for elderly, homeless, transportation and healthcare to network, gain new knowledge and contribute to improvement or development of new services. The RSVP Director and Program Coordinator attended the Points of Light National Conference on Service and Volunteering in June 2013. All staff participated in the CNCS Virtual Conference in August. They also listen to webinars on veterans, performance measures and inclusion. RSVP holds regular staff meetings and all staff participate in the Community Participation Group meetings.

A key person that RSVP works with is the Chief Financial Officer of MFS. She has over 20 years experience in accounting, of which 15 were with non-profits. She has a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in management and a minor in accounting. She also holds an MBA Certificate in Human Resources. The CFO assists with the development of the RSVP budget, reviews and submits

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financial reports for RSVP's grants and oversees the financial staff of MFS.

The Chief Operating Officer provides regular supervision to the RSVP Director, represents MFS in the RSVP Community Participation Group and brings any concerns or issues to the senior management team. She has over ten years of experience in senior leadership in behavioral health and social services, in addition to many years of experience as a therapist, substance abuse counselor and providing outreach to the homeless population. She holds a Master's of Social Science Administration and has certification in Behavioral Health in Primary Care.

Demonstrates organizational capacity to:

1. Develop and implement internal policies and operating procedures to provide governance and manage risk, such as accounting, personnel management and purchasing.
2. Manage capital assets such as facilities, equipment and supplies.

MFS has an efficient and effective accounting system that follows "Best Practice Accounting" for all their procedures. Staff responsibilities are distributed to ensure all the proper checks and balances are in place. For example, expenditures are authorized by the program manager and sent to MFS's Accounts Payable office, which reviews the document for validity and proper authorization and enters it for payment. AP entry is reviewed by the Business Office Supervisor. The CFO reviews the selection of invoices for payment prior to the checks being printed. Checks and original invoices are given to the CFO for review and signature. Checks are mailed by the receptionist and bank reconciliations are completed by a staff accountant.

MFS's Human Resource Director has been with the agency for 12 years and has an assistant to ensure that all practices are observed by the 227 employees in the sponsoring agency. There is a comprehensive Human Resource manual that covers MFS's policies and procedures available in the RSVP office. The HR Director belongs to the New Hampshire State Association of Human Resource Directors. This department assists with advertising open positions, completes criminal background checks, motor vehicle checks, Bureau of Elderly Adult Services checks, and National Sex Offender Public Registry checks, employee orientation, benefit management and personnel management support.

MFS has a safety committee that meets monthly to ensure all work environments are safe for employees, develop and implement policies and procedures governing harmful situations with clients, conduct ergonomic assessments on employees, ensure fire inspections and drills are conducted and that all equipment is in working order, as well as develop and implement disaster preparedness plan. To enhance the security and safety of all staff in the event of an emergency, sites have programmed

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phones with an emergency panic button to page local police, office reception, and the emergency service provider to announce the need for assistance.

RSVP follows MFS's corporate policies regarding the purchase of office supplies, equipment and fixed assets. Items costing more than \$25 should have prior approval of the employee's manager. If cost exceeds \$100, it requires the approval of the employee's manager and the Director of Operations or the Chief Financial Officer. These policies are reviewed bi-annually. There is oversight by the Senior Management team for conference or seminar travel.

Demonstrates organizational infrastructure in the areas of robust financial management capacity and systems and past experience managing federal grant funds.

Monadnock Family Services was established in 1905 and has become known as a credible, reliable community mental health center. Monadnock RSVP has been successfully sponsored by MFS since 1974. MFS administers a budget of \$9.2 million and has oversight of the RSVP budget, files the quarterly FFR reports, and works with RSVP on financial reports and budgets for grants. MFS is committed to ensuring that RSVP remains a sustainable project active in the community and assists with identifying diverse funding sources with the assistance of the Development Director and Grant Writer. In FY 2012, they took in approximately \$350,000 in federal grants to run Agency programs. An annual financial audit is completed by an independent auditor firm. The last two audit reports showed no management comments.

Other

Not applicable

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

Not applicable