

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

Skylands RSVP is sponsored by the Northwest New Jersey Community Action Program, Inc. (NORWESCAP) and serves five counties in northwest New Jersey: Morris, Sussex, Warren, Hunterdon and Passaic. NORWESCAP, with a mission of "Creating Opportunities, Changing Lives", was incorporated in 1965, and touches the lives of over 39,000 individuals each year by offering, referring or collaborating with others to provide programs and education which help foster self-sufficiency.

The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures. An estimated 800 RSVP volunteers will serve. They will assist individuals to remain independent in the community by providing telephone reassurance and friendly visiting, home delivered meals, transportation services, and grocery shopping. They will provide health education; information on health insurance and benefits; and volunteer income tax assistance and financial literacy services. Services will be provided through a network of 110 community partners such as churches, governmental entities, and local non-profit agencies. Data collection is accomplished through surveys, pre-post tests and other outcome measurement tools as determined during programmatic planning. Outcomes include increased social ties, increased knowledge, monetary savings, improved strength, balance and health, safe and independent living; among many others.

The CNCS federal investment of \$249,342 will be supplemented by \$117,528 in local resources.

## Strengthening Communities

Description of the community and its needs:

The Northwest New Jersey Community Action Program (NORWESCAP) touches the lives of over 39,000 individuals each year in the counties of Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Hunterdon, Sussex and Warren. NORWESCAP has been incorporated since 1965 focusing on the mission of "Creating Opportunities. Changing Lives." In 2011 NORWESCAP undertook a new Poverty Study and needs assessment of the community which helps RSVP develop new volunteer positions and strengthen existing opportunities with adequate participation from community partners, citizens and other key stakeholders.

NORWESCAP originally became the sponsor for RSVP in Sussex and Warren Counties in 1974, and continued to strengthen and expand the program by adding Morris County in 2003 to the service territory, Hunterdon County in 2007 and Passaic County in April of 2008. In 2010, we coined the name Skylands RSVP, based on the New Jersey Tourism Bureau's name for our region. RSVP, being

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an integral part of NORWESCAP, contributes to their mission by recruiting volunteers to work within various programs; i.e., Head Start, Early Head Start, Family Self-Sufficiency, Women's Transition Center, Food Bank, and any other special projects or activities that may develop to improve and strengthen the community through volunteer engagement.

Our counties are in the Skylands region of northwest New Jersey and exhibit a terrain of rolling hills, broad valleys and numerous lakes. Warren, Hunterdon and Sussex counties are more rural in nature and are situated on the border of Pennsylvania and New York. Tourists are attracted to their state parks, lakes, and scenic roadways. While agriculture and recreation are integral parts of their economy, business and residential growth has been in a period of rapid growth since the last census was completed. Morris County is considered suburban and Passaic County includes the very urban and densely populated areas of Paterson, Passaic, and Clifton. In fact, Paterson has the second-highest density of any US city according to the US Census 2010 information.

Information contained herein has been gathered from 2010 and 2011 American Community Surveys of the US Bureau of the Census: Population Division; the Warren Country 2011 Division of Senior Services Community Needs Assessment; the United Way of Northern New Jersey 2008 needs assessment; and their recently commissioned ALICE study. ALICE is an acronym that stands for: Asset Limited, Income Constrained, yet Employed and behind the acronym are thousands of 'real' ALICEs: hard working residents who live each day just one step away from potential and debilitating crisis. In addition, data was collected from the 2008 Morris, Sussex and Hunterdon County Division of Senior Services' needs assessments; NORWESCAP's 2011 Poverty Study; and other sources as noted.

The elderly population of northwest New Jersey has been rising since the 2000 Census. According to the 2010 data that was collected, the over 65 population of Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren Counties has risen by roughly 17%. This is greater than the national average of 15% over the same time period. This growth means that there are over 177,000 seniors requiring services in the 5 counties that are being served by this grant. Specifically, Hunterdon County has 16,344, Morris County has 68,155, Passaic County has 60,324, Sussex County has 17,850 and Warren County has 15,292 seniors over the age of 65 according to the 2010 US Census. Although some of these areas are considered the most affluent in the country, a breakdown of the older adult population has shown that one out of four New Jersey residents over 65 are surviving on Social Security alone. This study, conducted by the New Jersey Foundation for Aging and Wider Opportunities for Women, has also concluded that the average older adult spends roughly 20% of his or her income on healthcare. According to a 2003 study by the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services (Center for Health

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Statistics), over 25% of adults over the age of 65 report their health status as either fair or poor.

These individuals face a variety of health issues that not only affect their quality of life but can also place a burden on caregivers and the healthcare system as a whole. Studies by Stanford University have shown that 80% of individuals aged 60 and over have one or more long-term health conditions and that preemptive health programs can help alleviate a variety health conditions and allow residents to live a full and more active life. Participating individuals can maintain their independence, be more active in their communities, and decrease their trips to doctors' offices and/or emergency rooms.

The US Administration on Aging has placed a nationwide priority on providing evidence-based preventative programs that will enhance "aging in place" and "staying independent as you age." Evidence-based programs are those that have been extensively researched, analyzed and documented to meet specific goals when the program is delivered exactly as designed. In addition, national aging organizations, such as the National Council on Aging (NCOA) and American Society on Aging (ASA), have recognized that evidence based programs are the future of supplemental health resources for the aging population. NORWESCAP RSVP strives to be at the forefront of this endeavor.

The Project Healthy Living Initiative is Skylands RSVP's solution to the need for a comprehensive senior health & wellness program in northwest New Jersey. Today's seniors face a variety of health issues and RSVP can supplement the traditional health care system by providing volunteer driven wellness programs that address the most critical areas of need. The goal of the Project Healthy Living Initiative is to continually provide more volunteer instructors for Evidence Based Programming, which would in turn provide more access to these proven programs, and thus increase the overall health of the senior population throughout northwest New Jersey.

RSVP has several programs in our Project Healthy Living Initiative that directly address these issues, including Project Healthy Bones; HealthEASE Move Today; Take Control of Your Health (a Chronic Disease Self-Management program and a Diabetes specific version of the program); A Matter of Balance, Managing Concerns About Falls; and SHIP (State Health Insurance Assistance Program in Morris County only). All of these programs are led by volunteers. NORWESCAP RSVP has become a recognized leader in evidence based programming throughout the state of New Jersey, and is recognized by the National Council on Aging (NCOA) as a key contributor in engaging older adults in evidence based programming.

Using the numbers above as a benchmark, there are over 40,000 older adults in northwest New Jersey who would dramatically benefit from access to our Project Healthy Living Initiative.

RSVP is also seeing an increased need in the community for older adult care and in-home services.

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To maintain their independence and remain in their home, seniors require the delivery of food and/or meals, transportation to and from medical appointments, companionship and other social interaction, assistance with bill paying and other money management services, and completion of an array of household repair and chore activities. A 2012 study by the NJ Foundation on Aging and Wider Opportunity for Women showed that 42.6% of seniors fall below the income level necessary to provide all these services on their own. Thus, it falls on the non-profit and government agencies within these municipalities to provide these services and allow this vulnerable population to continue to age in place. With charitable donations falling by 20% in 2012 alone (according to the Office of National Statistics), these organizations will require additional volunteer manpower to achieve their missions and provide these necessary services.

It is because of this rapidly growing population and their ever increasing need for services and assistance that Skylands RSVP has chosen Health Futures as its Primary Focus Category.

The five counties covered by this grant proposal also currently have almost 200,000 residents enrolled in Medicare. Past experience has shown that most Medicare beneficiaries frequently have questions about benefits, claims, supplemental policies, and long-term care insurance. In addition, the implementation of the Affordable Healthcare Act is raising even more questions as to how benefits may change and who will be covered by what Federal Program. Incorrect information, or a general lack of knowledge, can lead to residents making poor choices in their decision making. This can leave individuals being under-insured, paying for unnecessary options, or not utilizing all services and resources that are available.

How do service activities in Primary Focus Area lead to National Performance Measure outputs or outcomes?

The community needs in our Primary Focus Area have been identified and volunteers will undertake service activities as follows: Independent Living for Seniors and Caregiver Services - RSVP volunteers will serve as Friendly Visitors and Telephone Reassurance callers; Money Managers; Emergency Medical Transporters; Home Grocery Shoppers and Chore Corps members (Fix-it program). Health & Wellness - RSVP volunteers will serve as Peer Leaders in Project Healthy Bones, an osteoporosis prevention exercise and education program; Move Today, another exercise program, and Take Control of Your Health, a Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, and A Matter of Balance, Managing Concerns about Falls. In addition, volunteers will continue to offer counseling to Medicare enrollees (SHIP) and assist in annual enrollment in the Affordable Healthcare Act

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Marketplace.

Skylands RSVP has significant experience and leadership as the Coordinator of the Morris County State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), administrated by the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services. RSVP trained counselors have provided accurate and objective affordable care insurance counseling for over 25 years to thousands of consumers. Adept at explaining insurance options to consumers, RSVP counselors are trained and fully comply with all confidentiality laws and rules and are experienced having access to sensitive information about the client. Besides their training in Medicare, they are well versed in Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled (PAAD), and other low income insurance programs. Their experience in dealing with low --income and minority consumers has honed their customer service, sensitivity, cultural competency, and skilled expertise to effectively engage all populations.

Plan to support data collection, measurement and management:

RSVP staff work closely with approved stations to ensure that data and performance measure indicators are consistently being reported. Data is collected from stations and volunteers, denoting the impact and outcomes which are tracked demonstrating their efforts in working with priority community needs. Data collection is accomplished through surveys, pre- & post-tests and other outcome based measurement tools. Once the information is collected, it is used, not only to complete the reports required by the Corporation for National and Community Service, but also to make the community at large more aware of the impact our senior volunteers have in the community that they serve and to ensure projects are effective. Annually, an impact survey is distributed to all of our stations. This survey requests data on the number of volunteers currently serving and if that number should be increased or decreased. We request direct information on the impact the volunteers have on the organization and the community at large. We ask what would happen if volunteers were not available and we also ask if they are aware of any unmet needs in the community. This data collection and evaluation occurs throughout the year with two Volunteer Coordinators who work with stations daily throughout the calendar year to ensure that they are aware of their impact statements and ensure that they are keeping track of all necessary data which will then be transmitted to RSVP staff for inclusion in all CNCS reports.

Several of our impact programs fall within the Project Healthy Living Initiative. These programs are evaluated at the end of each session (depending on length of program). Since these programs are evidence-based, the measurement tools have been created nationally and are used wherever the

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program is delivered.

Additionally, Skylands RSVP has moved to administering a number of "signature" programs that are run by RSVP staff and leadership volunteers. These programs include VITA, our health initiatives, and the SHIP Medicare Counseling Program and allow the collection of accurate information because all volunteer work is overseen by RSVP staff and therefore ensure that data is collected in an accurate and confidential manor.

Activities in service to veterans and/or military families:

In addition to providing friendly visitors to our closest Veterans Hospital, RSVP is currently investigating ways to bring our volunteer-led evidence-based chronic disease self-management program, Take Control of Your Health, to our veterans and their families. RSVP volunteers are also partnering with a Morris County veteran who is determined to donate his property and build a unique housing facility for both male and female veterans. The project will include housing for family members of those veterans undergoing medical treatment and will provide the veterans with transportation to local institutions of higher learning. This dream may take many years to be fully realized, but RSVP volunteers are on the front lines assisting to make it a reality, by providing service in fundraising, business planning and administration. In addition, RSVP volunteers are providing workshops for organizations directly serving veterans and military families through NORWESCAP's financial literacy displaced homemaker programs.

### **Recruitment and Development**

Plan to create high quality volunteer assignments:

Volunteers will be recruited through the usual methods: advertisements in the local media, postings on volunteer recruitment websites, local speaking engagements and wide and comprehensive distribution of recruitment and marketing materials. Most importantly, a more targeted recruitment campaign is being developed to engage local corporations and their employees in assisting local non-profits and community initiatives.

RSVP is also continuing to move forward in engaging volunteers using technology. This includes Social Media devices such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. These technologies are allowing RSVP to access a previously untapped group of technologically savvy volunteers who are not visiting the traditional volunteer websites used in the past. In 2010 we launched our "E-News" which is distributed to both volunteers and stakeholders via email once or twice a month. The "E-News" allows us to inform our constituents of breaking news and opportunities for engagement, as well as provides

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a forum for on-going volunteer and station recognition.

In 2010 Skylands RSVP received a PNS (Program of National Significance) award from the Corporation. The purpose of the funded project was to increase the number of volunteers in our Project Healthy Living Initiative. Our Advisory Council "capacity builders" team developed a new recruitment model and we will continue building our capacity to increase "baby boomer" participation in our Primary Focus Area throughout the region we serve. The team continues to help us to build out our marketing/communication and recruitment plan; the road map which will lead us to recruit more volunteers and deliver those volunteers into the community. A marketing campaign aimed at baby boomers and younger seniors (55-70) was created in 2005 and included billboard advertisements in each county and a postcard mailing to 3,000 prospective volunteers. The message is, "We thought we could change the world, we still can. Volunteer!" We continue to utilize this material and investigate avenues to attract younger volunteers to RSVP and to develop new, meaningful volunteer opportunities.

To further enhance the Capacity Builders team, we will continue to seek members from the social service network, the baby boomer population and the corporate world who have skills in marketing, computers, and education.

The Capacity Builders will also assist the Project Director and the Health & Wellness Coordinator in developing new community partnerships, strengthening existing partnerships and in developing a targeted corporate outreach plan, all of which will help us to build the number of volunteers meeting community needs.

When a potential volunteer expresses interest, we will focus on matching the needs and desires of the volunteer to the need and desire within the community. One tool we will use is a volunteer self-assessment survey which aids both the volunteer and, ultimately, our staff in aligning interests with available opportunities and which may also assist us in designing new programs which will align better with the volunteers' needs.

All new volunteers, after completing an enrollment form, are interviewed and given the opportunity to discuss their background and interests. Several volunteer positions which meet the new Focus Areas are discussed, allowing the new volunteer a choice of placements, the chance to try something new, to experience personal growth and to develop different skills.

During the course of this grant, new stations will be developed to target priority community needs of Morris, Sussex, Warren, Hunterdon and Passaic Counties as identified by their United Way, Social Service Agencies, and Human Services Departments.

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Site visits are conducted periodically to update stations on RSVP policy changes, to help develop quality volunteer assignments, and to review Memorandums of Understanding. Time is allocated for staff to work with stations every summer and fall to improve their Impact Plans and update job descriptions. Staff routinely interacts with local Volunteer Coordinators to keep the lines of communication open which allows them to ask questions or seek assistance whenever it is needed.

Plan to ensure volunteers receive the training needed to be effective:

Using the tools developed by the Capacity Builders, we will continually recruit new volunteers to serve as Peer Leaders in the Project Healthy Living Initiative. When a volunteer indicates an interest in our Project Healthy Living Initiative programs, RSVP provides training directly to the volunteers. Each of the programs has a specific schedule and agenda of training. After attending the required 2 or 4 day training session (depending on program), these Peer Leaders will serve in teams of two to deliver the programs in local community settings. This teamwork helps to ensure the integrity of program delivery and provides an opportunity for shared responsibilities. Peer Leaders' commitment to the program and their testimony of program benefits are highly effective in marketing/expanding the program as well. The combination of physical activity and education within the programs provides the opportunity for Peer Leaders and participants to share experiences, explore new information, and improve health status. Peer Leaders assist in determining the program schedule, locating a site/room for the program, recruiting and enrolling participants, and maintaining all files and required paperwork for reporting.

The State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) holds trainings for volunteers at least once a year in every region of the state. This 5-day comprehensive training is instrumental for the volunteer to be able to assist Medicare Beneficiaries with their concerns. Volunteers with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) undertake an on-line training offered by the IRS which is supplemented by in-person sessions conducted by experienced VITA volunteers.

In addition, we will also be working closely with NORWESCAP's Financial Literacy project to build a stable of trained volunteer presenters and financial counselors. These volunteers will receive specific training in the workshop modules they will present, as well as training in poverty issues. RSVP and the Financial Literacy Program will be working together to develop outcome measurements during the coming year.

Demographics of the community and plans to recruit a volunteer pool reflective of the community:

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Morris County annually vies with Somerset County as the richest county in New Jersey. Morris County is consistently in the top ten counties in the United States by both median household income and per capita income. In 2011, approximately 4.8% of families were below poverty level (an increase of 2.9% since 2008). Hispanic residents (of any race) equal 11.8% and constitute a majority of the population in Dover and over a quarter of the people in Morristown. Over 18% of residents in Parsippany-Troy Hills are Asian-Americans. In 2009, Forbes magazine ranked the county sixth best place in the nation to raise a family. This was the best of any county in the state. The ranking was mainly due to the high school graduation rate of 98.4% and employment possibilities from area industry. According to the Morris County Economic Development Corporation, approximately fifty Fortune 500 businesses have headquarters, offices or a major facility in Morris County.

In Sussex County, Hispanics (of all races) make up approximately 6.4% of the county population. Sussex County is ranked 91st wealthiest county in the US by per capita income. In 2011, approximately 8% of families were below poverty level (an increase of 3.4% since 2008). Since agriculture is on the decline in the county and there is little industry, Sussex County is considered a "bedroom community" as most residents commute to neighboring counties (Bergen, Essex, or Morris) or to New York City for work.

Approximately 108,300 individuals reside in Warren County, spread over a radius of 358 square miles. Residents aged 60 and over living in the County total 20% Hispanic residents (of all races) account for 7%. Approximately 10% of families were below poverty level in 2010 (an increase of almost 2% since 2010).

In Hunterdon County the population is 128,000, with residents aged 60 and over numbering 20% and 5.5% of the people in Hunterdon County are of Hispanic descent (any race). Approximately 4.3% of families were below poverty level in 2011 (an increase of 2.3% since the 2008 American Fact Finder Survey). Hunterdon County's median income for a household makes it fourth highest county in the country, and thirteenth in the country based on per capital income.

And finally, the demographics for Passaic County include a population of 502,000, of which 17%, are over 60 years old and consists of 12% African-American and 37% of Hispanic descent. Approximately 20.8% of families are below poverty level (an increase of 9% since the 2008 Survey). The cities of Passaic (21%) and Paterson (22%) have some of the highest poverty rates in the state.

RSVP will use this information to help recruit volunteers that are similar to the population breakdown of each county. This is extremely important in programs such as VITA, SHIP and Financial Literacy where volunteers with varied ethnic backgrounds are able to speak the native

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language of clients who have English as their secondary language and may be able to communicate more effectively in their native tongue. Recruitment materials will be made available in both Spanish and English. With the assistance of our partner agencies, bi-lingual volunteers will be recruited to assist in developing those materials and in providing outreach to the community.

Another demographic that must be considered when recruiting volunteers to meet community needs is the change from the "GI Generation" to the "Baby Boomers." Today the traditional senior volunteer pool is shrinking. These are the individuals we call "the Greatest Generation" or the "GI generation." The GI Generation was an extraordinary group of volunteers. They filled our daytime positions for the last 35+ years and were instrumental in enabling our organizations to grow and expand. Their attitudes toward volunteering and patterns of service have helped to shape volunteerism into what it is today. Unfortunately, as members of the GI Generation retire from our programs, they leave behind an infrastructure that worked well for them, but is unlikely to meet the needs of future generations of volunteers.

The next, and largest, generation of senior volunteers is the "Baby Boomers", the oldest of whom turned 65 in 2011. Our non-profit organizations have an historic opportunity to tap this newly abundant resource to tackle social problems and enrich community life. The Boomer Generation is healthier, better-educated, and more demanding than the previous one. Boomers want choice. They want to be presented with a variety of options so they can pick the one that most closely match their unique needs. They will choose volunteer opportunities with careful thought and deliberation. Baby Boomer volunteers are questioning the present, refocusing, reassessing and reprioritizing. There is a movement from workplace success to lives of significance. Volunteering with this program offers boomers the ideal opportunity and outlet for feeling significant and fills their need for social and community involvement. Boomers are often strapped for time during traditional workweek hours. RSVP volunteer opportunities are available on evenings and weekends when the boomers are more able to commit. Technology will be utilized to the fullest to further diversify the time commitment required. The range of RSVP and community programs available will appeal to boomers looking to make a difference and fulfilling an organization's mission. The volunteer responsibilities we create will allow baby boomers to assume leadership roles and develop relationships to positively benefit and enrich themselves and the community in their volunteer experiences.

Plan to retain and recognize volunteers:

To recognize the efforts of our volunteers, we utilize several methods, including articles in our

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newsletter and "E-News", presenting of the President's Volunteer Service awards, small group events, and small tokens of appreciation. Everyone needs to feel appreciated for contributing their time spent helping others. In addition, staff sends articles to all the local newspapers and cable networks about a particular volunteer or a station that is meeting a priority community need. Our Capacity Builders are also in the process of developing an annual "Volunteer of the Year" award to recognize an outstanding RSVP member.

Staff meets with existing volunteers during station visits to acknowledge their contribution of time and also, to give them a chance to voice concerns. Orientation on RSVP program changes is given at this time.

We are also certified to present the Volunteer Management Training developed by the Points of Light Institute. This six-session training is offered to all of our partner stations and their volunteer coordinators, thereby increasing their ability to provide effective volunteer leadership to the RSVP members and other volunteers serving in their agencies. This training program stresses the importance of volunteer recognition in retaining volunteers.

### **Program Management**

Project Infrastructure:

As an RSVP sponsor for over 30 years, NORWESCAP has in place the infrastructure to ensure continued management of volunteer stations and volunteers. Also, since NORWESCAP is the current sponsor there will be no disruption of current volunteers if we are awarded this grant. We have been monitoring our partner stations and have been "graduating" stations as needed. For example, several years ago we stopped recruiting new volunteers for nursing home and senior center stations. However, we have been able to maintain the volunteers who are still involved with those stations under our Community Priorities focus area.

The Project Director oversees all aspects of the day-to-day operation of the Skylands RSVP Program. RSVP currently has a staff of five employees. The Director and Assistant Director are full-time employees. The Volunteer Coordinators (2) and the Administrative Specialist are part-time, working between 20 and 27 hours/week. The Director and Assistant Director have a combined 30 years of experience managing volunteers in the community. All other staff members have been with the program for at least 4 years and are well-versed in the RSVP program regulations as well.

All staff members are evaluated and receive a written evaluation annually, at a minimum, by their supervisor to insure that they are meeting expectations. Job descriptions are thoroughly explained and provided in writing to newly hired employees. They are also located in the NORWESCAP

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Personnel Policies and are available in paper and electronically.

The RSVP Capacity Builders/Advisory Council meets at regular intervals to assist staff by sharing ideas and making suggestions that will enhance the RSVP project. They will form the core of our Community Advisory Council and will be responsible for evaluating the entire RSVP project on an ongoing basis.

A local agency or station is often contacted to send a speaker, keeping the membership aware of community needs. To enhance the team, we will seek out individuals from the community and faith based network, the baby boomer population and the corporate world that have skills in marketing, computers, and education.

The Capacity Builders Team will directly assist the RSVP Project in crafting the right marketing message so as to be successful in recruiting the new volunteers. All messages will clearly communicate the mission of RSVP and the specific goals and objectives of the project. The Capacity Builders will identify and target existing groups of potential 55+ volunteers who may have interest in these exact programs. They will also assist in establishing strategic relationships with 55+ professionals. This will include contacting the human resources departments at corporations and other employers to distribute information, offer speaking "lunch & learn" opportunities and participating in pre-retirement seminars. It will also include outreach to government agencies, service clubs and other organizations in the community.

The Capacity Builders will also assist the Project in developing new community partnerships, strengthening existing partnerships and in developing a targeted corporate outreach plan, as well as assisting in fund- and friend-raising.

Project staff development is ongoing with multiple opportunities throughout the year including the opportunity to attend seminars presented by other agencies and our sponsoring agency and project staff also have access to hundreds of relevant courses in the Essential Learning (e-learning offered by NORWESCAP) menu. Regularly scheduled in person staff meetings will keep them informed of program revisions and problems that require their attention. E-mail will allow us daily contact with each other.

The RSVP Enrollment form and MOU are continually reviewed to ensure compliance with all federal regulations and are revised as needed. MOUs are discussed in detail with each station wishing to be a partner with RSVP. They are reviewed in annual station visits.

RSVP requires supplemental funding to enable it to expand. Our stations often supply us with in-kind contributions of space. Corporations and area small businesses will be targeted for larger

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donations during the grant year, utilizing excess funds only. Staff will contact foundations, applying for grant monies to supplement projects that meet a specific community need, utilizing excess funds only. Our goal is to meet priority community needs through the service of senior volunteers.

### Measuring Performance:

Yearly surveys are sent to all active volunteers and stations, providing input on the gaps that still exist as we strive to meet priority community needs. Other issues addressed on the surveys, are; dialogue with the RSVP office, difficulties with volunteers or station personnel, and questions they may wish to have answered in relation to MOUs, Impact plans and other RSVP program regulations. A biannual review of an aspect of the program is conducted by Advisory Council members to evaluate the accomplishments of the project and our sponsor in meeting RSVP's goals and commitment to the people of Morris, Sussex, Warren, Hunterdon and Passaic Counties.

Data is collected from stations and volunteers, denoting the impact they are making in working with priority community needs. Data collection is accomplished through surveys, pre- & post-tests and other outcome measurement tools. Once the information is collected, it is used, not only to complete the reports required by the Corporation for National and Community Service, but also to make the community at large more aware of the impact our senior volunteers have in the community that they serve. In addition, an impact survey is distributed to all of our stations. This survey requests data on the number of volunteers currently serving and if that number should be increased or decreased. We request direct information on the impact the volunteers have on the organization and the community at large. We ask what would happen if volunteers were not available and we also ask if they are aware of any unmet needs in the community.

Several of our Primary Focus Area programs fall within the Project Healthy Living Initiative. These programs are evaluated at the end of each session (depending on length of program). Since these programs are evidence-based, the measurement tools have been created nationally and are used wherever the program is delivered.

### Track Record in Primary Focus Area:

In the past year, our Primary Focus Area volunteers provided assistance as follows:

\* Telephone reassurance and friendly visiting assistance was provided to 275 seniors. 83% of seniors responding to the annual survey reported a minimum of 45% increase in social interaction during the year. 42% of respondents reported feeling safer or significantly safer because of the

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volunteer interventions.

\* RSVP SHIP volunteers served over 1,000 Medicare Beneficiaries with direct one-on-one assistance. We regularly survey our SHIP clients shortly after service is provided. These surveys continually show a high satisfaction (90%+) with the services our RSVP volunteers are providing, reporting increased knowledge of health benefits status, decreased stress over health insurance issues and increased ability to make decisions about their health insurance. In addition, approximately 3,000 community members received information about Medicare and the SHIP program.

\* Our grocery shopping volunteers assisted 32 homebound seniors with weekly grocery shopping. Based on annual survey, 50% of the matched homebound seniors believe they are able to obtain healthy, nutritious groceries and necessary medications, through the services of the RSVP volunteers, thus allowing them to maintain their independence. 68% believe they have been able to continue to live independently because of the RSVP volunteers' service.

\* 300 homebound seniors received delivered meals during the past year. 62% of the clients reported increased socialization when surveyed and 79% reported an increased sense of security and maintained their independent housing situations.

\* 18 Clients matched with an RSVP volunteer in the Money Management Program saw a 55% reduction in late/overdraft fees during the first two months of establishing the volunteer relationship. 79% of matched clients attained a more stable financial position during the year.

\* 96% of the almost 300 participants in our Project Healthy Bones osteoporosis education and exercise program reported the ability to lift heavier objects, increased mobility and increased ease in accomplishing the activities of daily living.

\* 88% of participants in our Chronic Disease Self-Management and A Matter of Balance wellness programs reported increased confidence in accomplishing the activities of daily living, including walking, climbing stairs and carrying packages. 97% reported increased physical activity as well.

\* In 2012, we undertook a Volunteer Satisfaction Survey, which showed that 77% of RSVP volunteers were satisfied with the placement process, support and recognition provided by the project. Over 90% are satisfied with the volunteer contributions they are making to their community.

\* We also distributed a Station Survey to our partners in 2012. Of those responding, 58% indicated that RSVP volunteers made a significant impact on their organization's ability to achieve their mission.

\* In late 2010 (FY 2011), the Capacity Builders Team undertook a survey of the "E-News". This was a new endeavor in 2010 and we wanted to assess its value to our partners. Respondents report

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that the "E-News" assists them in building staff skills (61%), in recruiting and retaining volunteers (70%), in learning about new resources (86%), and in learning new ideas relevant to the work they perform (84%).

### **Organizational Capability**

The Northwest NJ Community Action Program (NORWESCAP) was incorporated by local interested citizens in 1965, under President Johnson's "War on Poverty". We provide services to over 39,000 low income persons in the counties of Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, and Warren. About 80% of the people that we serve are working, with 3% receiving public assistance, and the balance receiving their income from Social Security and SSI. The agency's budget of over 30 million dollars comes from 60 different sources. There is a Board of Trustees, who represents elected officials, low income clients, and the private sector. NORWESCAP has been sponsoring RSVP since 1973. NORWESCAP annually receives over \$31,542,634 in Federal, State, Local and private grants, including LIHEAP vouchers, Child Care Vouchers and WIC Vouchers.

NORWESCAP's sponsorship allows us to have access to a fully-staffed and operational accounting department which assures accountability and efficient and effective use of all available resources. Procedures for handling donations, disbursements, and grant funds are all included in NORWESCAP's Standard Operating Procedures and Internal Controls which are administered by the Chief Fiscal Officer. For over 40 years, NORWESCAP's accounting department has produced clean audits with no disallowed costs, and maintains an excellent turn-around time for disbursements.

NORWESCAP maintains a separate administration department, which provides leadership, technical assistance and support to the 15 different program departments that make up the agency. Administration also provides support for personnel policies and benefits, insurance needs, grant writing and fundraising, computer technology, phone, and the physical plant. All projects under the administrative supervision develop a long-range plan every three years. When the plan is in place, a bi-annual report is completed, showing program progress.

NORWESCAP has also offered all Program Directors the ROMA training in outcomes measurement and a software package that helps to capture client and volunteer outcomes.

Because of NORWESCAP's ongoing success in managing programs and budgets, the infrastructure is in place to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight and day-to-day operational support to ensure compliance with RSVP program requirements and to ensure accountability and efficient and effective use of available resources.

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### Staff Positions:

RSVP has a staff of five employees. The Director and Assistant Director are full-time employees. The Volunteer Coordinators (2) and the Administrative Specialist are part-time, working between 20 and 27 hours/week. The Director and Assistant Director have a combined 30 years of experience managing volunteers in the community.

Because of our strong, dedicated staff, Skylands RSVP currently has the organizational capacity to continue to provide programmatic and fiscal oversight to the RSVP programs in our Primary Focus Area and other Focus Areas as well. For example, in order to train volunteers to be peer leaders in the Primary Focus Area programs, a certified Master Trainer must provide the training. The RSVP Director is a Master Trainer in all of the programs. One staff member is a Master Trainer in Take Control of Your Health and Project Healthy Bones. One volunteer is a Master Trainer for A Matter of Balance. In addition, two RSVP volunteers are Master Trainers for Project Healthy Bones. RSVP will also collaborate with Master Trainers from other organizations in each of the counties we serve to ensure that enough new peer leaders are trained.

### Other

N/A

### PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A