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Executive Summary

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of the Red River Valley (RRV) has been a fundamental organization to area senior citizens since 1974. For over 39 years, the University of Minnesota Crookston has proudly acted as the sponsoring organization of RSVP in the Red River Valley. The University of Minnesota Crookston continues to actively support the innovative programming to area senior citizens by continuing to support the outstanding efforts of RSVP volunteers. RSVP is one of the largest volunteer networks in the nation for people 55 and over. Seniors age 55 and over are able to engagement valuable talents and skills learned throughout decades and apply these abilities through vital and essential volunteer activities of their choice. The mission of RSVP is to facilitate volunteerism within men and women, 55 years of age or older, and community groups to promote and increase volunteerism and the potential for making a difference in the lives of people and communities. Approximately 700 active RSVP of the RRV volunteers will serve in meaningful areas of volunteer service that focus on the needs of area seniors. The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures with focus on the primary community need of independent and safe living of seniors. Some of the programs our dedicated volunteers will partake in include Home Delivered Meals, Transportation, Bone Builders, Groceries to Go, Handyman, and Food Shelf programs to help individuals obtain independent living within our communities. At the end of the three-year grant returned surveys will indicate an increase in social ties and/or perceived social support; transportation needs are being met through volunteer efforts, and reports of increased food security. The CNCS federal investment of \$57,653 annually will be supplemented by local resources of \$30, 288 (County funding, local United Ways), and funding from the Minnesota Board of aging grant at \$22,803 annually.

Strengthening Communities

RSVP of the Red River Valley encompasses a 7 county region that includes; Polk, Pennington, Norman, Kittson, Marshall, Red Lake, and Roseau Counties. These seven counties exemplify rural communities with a higher than average aging population within Minnesota. The most recent demographic information provided by the US Census department shows that the average percentage of senior citizens in Minnesota age 65 and older is 13.6%. In all 7 counties within the Red River Valley this percentage ranges from 14.9% to 22.9% throughout the region. The Red River Valley is a generous region that covers 8,511 geographic square miles. According to the most recent demographic information provided by the US Census, 85,629 individuals reside within the Red River

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Valley, 7,241 of those individuals being veterans. Throughout the region, an average of 19% of the population is 65 and older. Within rural communities in the Red River Valley it is concluded that large aging populations are increasing throughout this region, while there is an outflow of younger adults according to the Rural Assistance Center. According to the U.S. Administration on Aging, by 2020, nearly one in six individuals will be age 65 or older. Communities within the Red River Valley range in populations of less than 500 to communities of 7,000-9,000. The most recent information provided by the US Census demographics also reflects that the average per capita income within the Red River Valley is \$47,659 (MN Statewide Average is \$58,476) with an average poverty level at 11 percent.

Senior citizens that reside within the Red River Valley face challenges of remaining healthy and independent within their own homes due to gaps within crucial services throughout this rural region. A deficit of access to specialty medical services and supplemental services can be difficult for seniors to access within remote rural regions. This can pose a problem for seniors wishing to age in place. It is more important than ever for senior citizens to remain healthy, active, and remain in control of their personal independence throughout the aging process. The Older American Act (OAA) services are intended to foster connection between older adults and community-based services. According to the U.S. Administration on Aging, home-delivered meals, transportation services and caregiver support programs funded under the Older Americans Act directly or indirectly provide services to those who would otherwise be institutionalized or isolated, and assist frail and vulnerable elderly in maintaining their independence. Elderly who reside in Red River Valley communities face deficiencies with transportation such as rides for essential appointments, medical appointments, business errands, shopping and senior activities; lack of access to medical care; unavailable cultural and social services; and lack of adequate housing (Older Americans 2012). RSVP of the Red River Valley recognizes the challenges senior citizens are faced with and actively support the health and independence of senior citizens who wish to age in place. Our volunteers actively work to help fill in gaps in community outreach programs and services. As a result, RSVP of the Red River Valley identifies a primary emphasis on Healthy Futures as a focus area for volunteer services. Programs and services that RSVP currently has in place in regards to these services are the following programs; Groceries to Go Program, Handyman Program, Bone Builders, Food Distribution by Meal Dispensing Sites and Food Shelves, Transportation Services, Relief Quilting, and assembling Comfort Bears.

Bone Builders is an exercise program that promotes health and independence specifically designed of aging individuals. This program has been shows to prevent and reverse the diagnosis of osteoporosis,

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improve balance, enhance energy and well-being, increase socialization for reclusive seniors, and provides an opportunity for senior citizens to have access to health education. Senior citizens today are faced with challenges when it comes to preventative health services, at times seniors may not have access to preventative wellness programs or may be intimidated in a traditional fitness center environment. Bone Builders is a program that is instructed and led by peer volunteers, many of which may be experiencing similar aspects in regards to the aging process. The RSVP Bone Builders exercise program relies upon weight training to protect against fractures caused by osteoporosis by increasing muscular strength and bone density. These classes are held twice weekly for one hour duration that incorporates not only physical exercises, but information and education on health related topics.

Individuals who participate in Bone Builders classes will be tracked through class roster/sign in sheets at each individual class site throughout the region. Volunteer instructors will ensure that all class participants have signed in for classes. Volunteers will also report to RSVP project staff regarding any new or interested individuals wishing to participate in Bone Builders. Project staff will communicate with appropriate Bone Builders volunteer trainers to ensure that all required paperwork is completed prior to class participation. Volunteers will submit monthly volunteer trainer hours to the project manager and will also maintain class logs. RSVP project staff will communicate with Bone Builders volunteer trainers to ensure class lists are up to date in order to maintain accurate class rosters. Participants within the Bone Builders program have expressed positive adjustments within their outlook on maintain personal independence. Prior to starting Bone Builders some seniors within the Red River Valley expressed a feeling of having little control over their personal health and wellness. Many RSVP of RRV Bone Builders participants report that with continued participation of the Bone Builders classes, an awareness of improved sense of well-being, independence, and improved quality of life has been reflected throughout many participants as reported in annual Bone Builders satisfaction surveys. As a result, participants in the Bone Builders program, under the Healthy Futures performance measure, will have opportunities to participate in programming specifically targeted towards health education. Due to the rural nature of the Red River Valley, Bone Builders allows rural communities opportunities for health and wellness programming that otherwise would not be made available in rural Northwest Minnesota.

Within the Healthy Futures parameters, volunteers within the RRV will also dedicate their time and talents to food delivery with Home Delivered Meal (HDM) programming. Due to the aging population within the RRV, it is crucial that in order for area senior citizens to age in place

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independently within their own homes those seniors have access to sufficient nutrition to maintain their personal strength and health. According to Dr. Cynthia Haines, MD, a healthy diet packed with vital nutrients can help ward off potential health problems that are common in senior citizens, like constipation, heart problems, diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. Nutritious foods will also help maintain a healthy weight and can increase energy levels. RSVP volunteers will help senior citizens within the RRV to age in place with Home Delivered Meal services that allow them to live independently. Seniors within the RRV will report an increase of social ties and social support due to HDM programs. RSVP of the RRV will serve at 20 nutrition sites under the supervision of Lutheran Social Services. Homebound seniors will receive hot nutritious meals. Meals will be tracked through nutrition site participation logs managed under Lutheran Social Services. RSVP volunteers will contribute volunteer efforts to help area seniors' age in place through home delivered meal programs, where nutritious food will be delivered to homebound or older adults and individuals to allow them to live independently. Seniors receiving Home Delivered Meals will report having increased social ties and/or perceived social support due to food delivery.

According to the Fourth National Survey (2008) conducted by the U.S. Administration on Aging, almost half (47.9%) of transportation users served by the Aging Services Network relied on transportation services under the Older American Act for almost all of their rides; 45.6% of the riders described themselves as "mobility impaired" (i.e., have no car, do not drive or do not live within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a fixed route stop). The RRV is also plagued with transportation challenges as a result of a rural demographic and higher than average aging population. 3 volunteer stations throughout the RRV have enlisted to help seniors within our communities with transportation challenges in order to assist seniors aging in place. Senior Citizens within the RRV will be able to utilize transportation services in order to be present for crucial engagements such as doctors' appointments, health check-ups, social activities to promote psycho-social health, and other commitments that improve quality of life and implement a sense of independence within seniors.

According to Land of the Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging, through their Gaps and Regional Analysis, transportation was frequently identified as an unmet need in Region One and is the most challenging to address. Seniors who are physically unable to drive, as well as others who choose not to drive are unable to drive find affordable or available transportation to needed appointments and engagements. Due to the nature of the rural demographics within the region, most medical appointments are located in communities many miles from the clients home location, thus making it challenging to find crucial transportation options. As part of the Rural Transportation Collaborative,

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Marshall County Social Services, and the DART program, RSVP volunteer drivers will provide crucial transportation options for social service clients, homebound senior citizens or older adults and individuals with disabilities receiving transportation services that allow these individuals to live independently and age in place. As a result, clients utilizing transportation services provided by RSVP volunteers will report having increased social ties and/or perceived social support within communities offering transportation services. Transportation logs will be maintained by Rural Transportation Collaborative, Marshall County Social Services, and the DART program. Clients utilizing transportation services will be surveyed annually by RSVP project staff to measure social ties and support in regarding to maintaining independence in their own homes so that seniors may age in place.

Significant increases in life expectancy, a growing elderly population, and advances in medical technology are setting the stage for long-term care challenges in the 21st century nationally and in Minnesota. According to the 2000 census, the 7 counties within the Red River Valley services by RSVP have a greater percentage of persons age 65 and older (14.9% to 22.9%) than the state average (13.6%). The state poverty level is reported to be at 11%, while the average poverty level within the 7 RRV counties holds true according to the most recent demographic information provided by the U.S. Census. Land of the Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging reports the Gaps Analysis Profile indicated that chore services within the region are limited, making aging in place independently challenging for seniors. RSVP volunteers are able to assist homebound seniors, including frail elderly, increase their sense of well-being by helping them feel safer and less isolated within their own homes.

In order to live independently, many seniors and adults with disabilities will require assistance with activities of daily living; companionship to increase social ties and support; and other services such as grocery delivery. Groceries to Go (GTG) is a program designed to support homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities to live independently in their own homes so that they may age in place. RSVP Groceries to Go volunteers who work with clients who are able to live independently within their own homes, however they require assistance to help maintain their current level of functioning. RSVP volunteers will grocery shop as well as provide companionship to GTG clients. Volunteers may help clients make a grocery list and will also put groceries away if required by clients. Clients may also opt to accompany volunteers to area grocery stores in order to maximize social support as a result of GTG programming. Clients will be referred to RSVP Groceries to Go programming by partnering agencies, i.e. Social Services, Home Health Agencies, Hospitals, Post-Acute Care Facilities, etc. Nutritional information regarding healthy eating will be provided to clients.

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RSVP volunteers will not only provide the service of grocery shopping, but the gift of time and companionship to increase social ties to homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities. RSVP Volunteers will be coordinated by RSVP project staff to individual clients and will grocery shop one to two times per month minimum for their respective clients. GTG Clients will be asked to complete annual surveys that measure perceived social support and/or ties as a result of the Groceries to Go program. Clients will be asked to indicate if they are able to maintain the required level of independence to age in place in their own homes as a result of the Groceries to Go program. Client logs will be maintained by RSVP project staff. Project staff and volunteers will communicate as needed in regards to GTG clients.

Twentieth-century advances in protecting and promoting health among older adults have provided many opportunities for overcoming the challenges of an aging society. According to the health indicators presented in The State of Aging and Health in America 2013 highlight these opportunities. The State of Aging and Health in America 2013 states that by working to meet the goals for each of these key indicators, our nation can help to ensure that all of its citizens can look forward to living longer and living well. Seniors nationwide continue to struggle with personal independence within their own homes due to the challenges of the aging process. Due to the nature of the rural region surrounding the Red River Valley, the challenges that seniors face to maintain independence are amplified due to gaps in chore services within remote areas. Often times seniors wishing to age in place within their own homes may find that even their personal homes can become a challenging environment to maneuver. Homes that lack safety options and modifications for an aging senior may present hazards for homebound individuals. The RSVP Handyman Program can help homebound seniors, including frail elderly, increase their sense of well-being by helping them feel safer, less isolated, and increase social ties within their respective communities. Falls occurring within the elderly population pose serious risks. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately one-third of the elderly population 65 and older who live alone will fall each year. Additionally, of those who fall, approximately one in 40 will be hospitalized. Home modifications can help prevent accidents and falls and may help increase self-sufficiency while improving in-home mobility and safety for seniors who continue to live independently in their own homes while maintaining quality of life. Research suggests that over one-third of home accidents can be prevented by modifications and repairs. Many seniors on fixed incomes cannot afford to hire services for minor home repair projects or safety improvements that may be able to help them maintain personal independence in their own homes. The RSVP Handyman Program offers a valuable service to help

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keep seniors living safely and independently in their own homes.

RSVP of the Red River Valley takes pride in the Handyman program. RSVP provides options to area seniors who wish to age in place within their own homes by identifying the safety needs of area seniors linked with the talents of RSVP Handymen. The RSVP Handyman Program offers home modifications, maintenance, and minor repair services to help seniors age 60+ live in their homes safely and securely for as long as they are able. Each volunteer is required to complete a form listing the types of maintenance and repair projects they are capable and willing to perform, as well as ensuring that volunteers have the necessary tools required to complete specific tasks. Handyman Volunteers may install grab bars, hand rails, and hand held shower head; install smoke alarms, replace batteries in smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, build handicap ramps and porch steps, repair or replace steps and railings; fix leaky faucets and other minor plumbing challenges; clean out gutters and eave troughs; repair windows and doors; do seasonal repairs and weatherization projects; replace light bulbs and light fixtures as needed; and perform other duties that will allow clients to remain safe, comfortable, and independent in their homes. RSVP Handymen also complete background checks so that we may further ensure the safety and protection of area seniors. Clients who utilize the RSVP Handyman service sign a liability release form prior to the desired service. Skilled Handyman volunteers will volunteer their time and talents to area senior citizens who face barriers within their own homes. RSVP Handymen will complete minor repair jobs and safety improvements to the homes of area seniors. Volunteer labor will be free of charge and clients will provide the materials for the respective projects. RSVP recognizes that some seniors may be faced with financial challenges due to fixed incomes and may not be able to pay for crucial in home repairs or safety improvements. RSVP of the Red River Valley will assist seniors faced with financial struggles to alternative funding sources to ensure that repairs and safety improvements can be fulfilled in order to age in place successfully. RSVP of the Red River Valley may reimburse Handyman Volunteers for their mileage to any from the client's home as well as any outings where Handyman will leave to pick up supplies for the project. Referrals to the RSVP Handyman program will be made by Area County Health and Human Services departments, First Call for Hel, the Senior Linkage Line, Inter-County Nursing, community social workers, area non-profit organizations, and previous clients who have utilized the RSVP Handyman Program.

RSVP Handyman volunteers are placed with respective clients based on abilities, specific jobs, and previous experience. RSVP project staff place Handyman with clients to ensure successful completion of projects. Project staff maintains client logs and communicate with Handyman to ensure successful

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completion of specified jobs. Clients utilizing the Handyman service will be asked to complete annual surveys to indicate if services performed in their homes helped these individuals to successfully age in place as well as if they felt having increased social ties and/or perceived social support as a result of this valuable service. It is the goal of RSVP to help seniors age in place while living independently within their own homes due to the services of the RSVP Handyman Program.

A final note on the RSVP Handyman program is a newly found collaboration that will serve Veterans and Military families within the Red River Valley. RSVP is in the beginning stages of collaborating with Beyond the Yellow Ribbon. Beyond the Yellow Ribbon is a comprehensive program that creates awareness for the purpose of connecting Service members and their families with community support, training, services and resources. RSVP Handymen will be able to provide services to Veterans and military families that have deployed loved ones in the same capacity that the RSVP Handyman program allows area senior citizens to age in place. Veterans and military families will be able to utilize the RSVP Handyman services for minor in home modifications and repairs. Client and job logs will be maintained by RSVP Project staff in the same manner that senior clients utilize the Handyman Services. RSVP of the RRV is proud to offer the Handyman program to veterans and military families through our valuable volunteer efforts.

According to the US Census Bureau National population projections the current growth in the number and proportion of older adults in the United States is unprecedented in our nation's history. By 2050, it is anticipated that Americans aged 65 or older will number nearly 89 million people, or more than double the number of older adults in the United States in 2010. As a result of the aging population, senior citizens preferring to age in place may discover that a crucial component of the aging process is to maintain social ties with other individuals within their communities. Loneliness can become an unwelcome companion as senior citizens age and can lead to depression as well as physical problems. Seniors who wish to remain active in their respective communities may find that volunteering their time and talents in order to help serve those around them may increase their social well-being therefore improving quality of life throughout the aging process. RSVP encourages senior citizens throughout the Red River Valley to maintain social ties and also to enhance social wellbeing in order to have an optimum quality of life. RSVP supports two separate programs as a way to increase social ties and support to senior citizens within the Red River Valley. Relief Quilting and the Comfort Bear Program are two separate initiatives that promote companionship with RSVP volunteers while providing volunteer services and efforts that will be distributed within communities in the Red River Valley. The Maturing of America; Getting Communities on Track for an Aging

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Population, a report lead by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging identified ten best practices for communities to consider as their populations age. According to this article, the number one initiative on this list is prevention, and opportunities to engage older adults in purposeful volunteer activities. Volunteers participating in Relief Quilting efforts and the Comfort Bear program will allow active RSVP Volunteers to age in place in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible due to the aspect of companionship that is obtained by providing volunteer efforts in these settings. Relief Quilting and the Comfort Bear program allow RSVP volunteers to congregate while volunteering their time and talents to programs that will benefits community members. RSVP volunteers involved in these two programs will now complete annual surveys that measure who the companionship gained through these programs allows senior volunteers to age independently with a high quality of life. These senior volunteers will indicate that through the volunteer efforts and companionship obtained through these 2 programs increased their social ties and/or perceived social support.

The final service activity within the primary focus area, Healthy Futures, focuses on obesity and food. RSVP of the Red River Valley recognizes the current state of the economy and understands that the challenges posed to community members who face difficulties of keeping food in their homes. Throughout the RRV, more people are seeking the support of food distribution sites as a way to help increase food security for themselves and their children. While many individuals of area food distribution sites are employed, they are unable to purchase a sufficient amount of nutritionally balanced food to feed their families.

Senior citizens and working families increasingly visited food shelves from 2000 to 2008. High housing costs, rising prescription drug costs and low wages are cited by these populations as reasons for increased reliance on emergency food sources. Food shelf use is at record highs across the state of Minnesota. In 2008, this rate was nearly 15% higher than in 2007. North County food bank is the sole distributor of surplus food products to over 244 charitable food programs, including our soup kitchens, food shelves and homeless shelters. Other recipients include low-income individuals in need of supplemental assistance, group homes, senior programs, youth programs, addiction treatment centers and domestic abuse programs.

RSVP volunteers in collaboration with North Country Food Bank are committed to serve those in need throughout Northwestern Minnesota. As part of this commitment, North Country will distribute food under the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. As part of this program, North Country provides a 35-pound box of nutritious food each month to income-eligible and post-partum women

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and children up to age six through the Mothers and Children Program (MAC), and to low income seniors age 60+ through the Nutrition Assistance Program for Seniors (NAPS). North Country is able to distribute approximately 1,800 boxes of food as part of this program each month. This program is crucial for low income seniors and young children in our services area. It provides a nutritious assortment of foods to participants at no cost.

RSVP Volunteers will service at food distribution sites throughout the RRV. Individuals receiving food distribution resources will be asked to participate in an annual survey to measure the number of individuals that report an increase in food security for themselves and their children as a result of food distribution site efforts. Client evaluation forms administered at food distribution sites once a year over a two month period will collect the necessary data to compile results within the food and obesity parameter.

As RSVP of the RRV continues to strive for success while meeting the needs of area senior citizens, we understand the importance of achieving measurable outcome and goals associated with volunteer efforts under the Corporation for National and Community Services. RSVP of the RRV has identified Healthy Futures as the Primary Focus. Along with ensuring RSVP volunteers are meeting the standard of CNSC programming, RSVP of the RRV will continue to perform volunteer efforts in areas that contribute to community priorities around our regions. Area volunteers will continue to put fourth volunteer efforts to areas such as congregate dining, providing resident care at area skilled nursing facilities, giving of time and talents to museums and libraries, and area thrift shops. RSVP of the RRV will continue to encourage all volunteer efforts by individuals who currently serve in areas that meet our community need priority, however will educate new volunteers about volunteer efforts within our Primary Focus areas, and areas that volunteer efforts result in outcomes. RSVP of the RRV will continue to be an organization that prides itself on meeting the needs of individuals within our communities while engage those age 55 and older in meaningful volunteer opportunities.

Recruitment and Development

RSVP of the RRV acknowledges the unique abilities of all volunteers on an individual level which is why volunteers participate in individualized orientation processes. New volunteers are required to participate in a detailed orientation about the RSVP organization. As well as becoming a volunteer with RSVP of the RRV, it is an expectation to be ambassadors for volunteerism within their communities as well as represent RSVP with the highest integrity. Volunteers who enroll in RSVP are asked to discuss with project staff, as well as indicate on their volunteer application previous skills, availability, interests, and talents that may be utilized in valuable programming within the RSVP of

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the RRV organization. Project staff connects volunteers to meaningful, productive assignments that meet their interests, tie availability, and experience level. RSVP seeks individuals to serve in volunteer efforts while utilizing the expertise of area senior citizens. It is imperative that volunteers find rewarding experiences throughout their volunteer effort as this is paramount to the success of RSVP of the RRV. Volunteer skills and interests are evaluated by RSVP project staff to ensure that the volunteer is placed in volunteer opportunities that meet specific criteria. New volunteers indicate to RSVP project staff the preferred volunteer duties based on their location throughout the RRV. New volunteers are assigned to a volunteer station depending on their specific interest of volunteerism within RSVP. Volunteer stations and RSVP project staff discuss the interests as well as abilities and talents to ensure that RSVP volunteers are able to have a successful volunteer experience. During this initial phase, volunteers may learn about other volunteer opportunities offered at their respective volunteer station. RSVP project staff encourages both volunteer and the station to discuss the volunteer assignment and other volunteer opportunities available.

Volunteer Stations are required to complete partnership agreements with RSVP of RRV and renew them on a 3 year cycle if they wish to remain affiliated with RSVP of the RRV. Volunteer stations are also required to complete annual safety assessments to ensure the safety of all volunteers engage in volunteer activities. These partnership agreements require that each station provide the necessary orientation, training, and supervision for each RSVP volunteer to successfully perform their volunteer duties of their assignment. RSVP of the RRV maintains communication with newly enrolled volunteers and follows up after initial enrollment to provide volunteers with the opportunity to offer feedback with their volunteer experience at their newly assigned volunteer station.

RSVP of the RRV believes in preparing volunteers for desired volunteer assignments. In order to cultivate skills and leadership training is to ensure that all volunteers participate in the appropriate trainings depending on volunteer assignments. RSVP of the RRV has program manuals for its signature programs, training sessions, and ongoing support and education. Bone Builders is an example of a detailed training that is required by all volunteer trainers. Initial Bone Builders trainers receive preliminary training to prepare them for leading Bone Builders as well as educate trainers on the benefits of exercise. Following this training, RSVP project staff attends the first class and lead it to give instructors another opportunity to observe a real time class. Following a six weeks of class, project staff return for a retraining, offering trainers another opportunity for support from RSVP. Also instructors are granted a DVD of all the exercises for them to review as needed, trainers receive a monthly newsletter, and an opportunity to participate in a semi-annual recognition/workshop

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inviting trainers to receive education from a local physician and other speakers.

RSVP of the RRV firmly believes that traditional volunteer efforts will continue to not only enhance communities within our region, but also will contribute to high quality of life for senior volunteers. However, RSVP of the RRV understands the importance of exhibiting measurable outcomes and outputs in order to meet the criteria for CNCS performance measures. With this initiative in mind, new volunteers will work with RSVP project staff for assignment to a primary volunteer opportunity. RSVP project staff will educate volunteers about how volunteer efforts fit into performance measures and how this data is translated in order to create a better understanding of the crucial volunteer efforts that are conducted through RSVP programs. RSVP encourages all seniors to take active roles in their communities whether or not they are yet volunteers the RSVP organization. Because we are interwoven with other senior service entities in our region we understand the needs of communities and the resources of our seniors. RSVP of the RRV strives constantly to connect the two and takes seriously the challenges involved in recruiting Baby Boomers, in particular. New partnerships are being formed to offer volunteer roles to appeal to this new generation of volunteers. RSVP of the RRV's role in implementing new initiatives, supervision of volunteers, and offering assistance to out volunteer stations has been a key component in integrating senior service into the activities of other service programs within the region.

Pursuing the expertise of local individuals allows RSVP of the RRV to design programming to meet the specific needs of individual communities while capitalizing on the unique talents of local citizens who have a vested interest in making communities within the RRV strong and vibrant. RSVP of the RRV is maintains a reputation of being a respected organization throughout the RRV. Volunteers, clients, community members and associations alike recognize the integrity of not only volunteers who give of their time and talents, but the worthy programs that enhance our communities and residents. It is because of this outstanding reputation that RSVP has over 700 dedicated volunteer with varied talents that are utilized throughout RSVP volunteer programs. RSVP of the RRV appreciates the need to continue volunteer recruitment efforts and assignments in order to continually meet the needs of area community members. RSVP recruits local community leaders and volunteers, who value the activities and accomplishments of RSVP and its volunteers, to serve on its Advisory Council. RSVP seeks individuals to serve on this committee who are knowledgeable about local human and social needs, skilled in the field of volunteerism, capable of assisting the program with administrative issues, and supportive of promoting older adults as important resources within the communities. RSVP of the RRV project staff provides annual training to the RSVP of the RRV Advisory Council.

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RSVP of the RRV encourages senior residents, persons with disabilities, minorities, and or isolated seniors to serves as volunteers and informs the key stakeholders and the public-at-large about the impact senior volunteers are having within their communities. The University of Minnesota Crookston's University Relations department has structured public relations network and with their connections, assists RSVP of the RRV in delivering compelling stories and applicable data to demonstrate the importance and impact of these volunteer efforts. The Advisory Council members for RSVP of the RRV serve as liaisons between RSVP and their communities through their in-depth knowledge of the program and an ability to serve as RSVP advocates and volunteers.

The longevity of RSVP of the RRV and its strong relationship with its sponsoring organization, University of Minnesota Crookston, has solidified its role as a vital community partner and a leader in community service. RSVP project staff actively and continually cultivates relationships with area senior centers, civic organizations, Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion programs, city and county governments, hospital, skilled nursing, and post-acute care auxiliaries, garnering resources for publicly recognizing volunteers for their service. RSVP of the RRV is continually reviewing methods to modify volunteer recognitions to fit the variations in funding and an ever changing demographic of volunteers. Volunteer recognitions have transformed from a sizeable annual event held at the University of Minnesota Crookston's campus. RSVP of the RRV realizes that holding one large event can pose transportation issues for senior volunteers who live vast distances away from the sponsor site. In order to help remedy this challenge, RSVP of the RRV undertook a new endeavor to recognize volunteer efforts. RSVP of the RRV project staff now travel to each county and bring the recognition event to each individual county, therefore minimizing travel distance for RSVP volunteers. This creates opportunities for more intimate recognition events and opportunities for senior volunteers to also discuss their crucial volunteer efforts with local County Commissioners, state representatives, and area agency on aging staff members. Volunteers not only receive recognition for their good work, but also take part in a luncheon, receive a gift for their service efforts, and also are able to register for donated door prizes that have been donated from various businesses in the respective county.

Program Management

Stations that are affiliated with RSVP of the RRV complete a Partnership Agreements or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which is renegotiated every three years. These Partnership Agreements include terms and conditions of program regulations and also address and identify prohibited activities. The Partnership Agreement includes a section that discusses the responsibility of RSVP of the RRV as well as a section that discusses responsibility of the Station. Recently RSVP of the

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RRV had the opportunity to partake in a compliance monitoring by our state Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) office. RSVP of the RRV Partnership Agreements have been reviewed and approved by the state CNCS office as meeting the requirements for RSVP programming.

As a result of this recent opportunity, RSVP of the RRV has added key features to both Partnership Agreements and Volunteer Enrollment forms to ensure compliance in both capacities. Stations must be in compliance with terms of the partnership agreement throughout the duration of the 3 year term.

At the end of partnership agreement period, stations and RSVP project staff will review the agreement if continued affiliation is desired by both parties. RSVP of the RRV and Stations wishing to be affiliated with RSVP of the RRV may review the Partnership Agreement at any time by either party as necessary. Volunteer stations affiliated with RSVP of the RRV are required to complete an annual safety assessment to ensure the safety of RSVP volunteers while on assignment. RSVP project staff visits station sites throughout the partnership agreement term as a method of ensuring that station sites are in compliance with the partnership agreement and to offer support as needed to both volunteers and stations.

RSVP of the RRV is establishing a new practice for all volunteer stations to ensure station compliance.

In order to ensure and reinforce compliance by Volunteer Stations, RSVP of the RRV will hold a first annual meeting with representatives from each station to review Partnership Agreements, terms of these agreements, responsibilities of both parties, and provide an opportunity to discuss best practice methods in regards to volunteer management efforts. RSVP of the RRV will hold its first Volunteer Station Compliance Review in the fall of 2013 and will continue to provide annual training as a part of the Partnership Agreement terms under RSVP of the RRV responsibilities.

RSVP of the RRV utilizes several methods to promote recruitment and management of volunteers outside the primary focus area which has been identified as Healthy Futures. When new volunteers are enrolled, a component of the orientation process will include an overview of current volunteer opportunities offered throughout their respective counties as well as RSVP of the RRV as a whole. New RSVP volunteers will be educated about volunteer opportunities that fall within our primary focus area of Healthy Futures and volunteers will be encouraged to help meet needs in this area as part of their primary volunteer assignment.

RSVP of the RRV, like any organization, recognizes the importance of shaping both volunteer efforts and programs as communities around our region change and grow. We at RSVP of the RRV feel that by continuing to put fourth volunteer efforts within our communities as demographics, mindsets, and leadership change within area communities that working as a collaborative force will continue to

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identify RSVP of the RRV as a leader of innovative change. Both stations and current volunteers will find that communication among volunteers and station managers alike has continued to place RSVP of the RRV as a leader of innovative volunteer efforts while meeting regional demands for volunteer efforts. This along with RSVP of the RRV's new approach to an annual Station Compliance Training will help RSVP continue to provide volunteer efforts to ever changing attributes within area communities.

Several methods are used to bring the most relevant volunteer programs to our diverse seven count region. Throughout the year project staff focuses efforts of understanding community needs through conversations with volunteers, station managers, advisory board members, and community members.

RSVP of the RRV project staff along with the Advisory Council partakes in a goal setting session to review regional community needs and to strategically align these needs with RSVP of the RRV strength and weaknesses. The Director of RSVP of the RRV sits on the following boards; Red Lake County Committee on Aging, Polk County Committee on Aging, Crookston United Way, Polk County Senior Providers, and TRIAD. RSVP of the RRV also annually ensures that county commissioners in each county are well informed of volunteer efforts within their respective counties through annual County Commissioner meetings. These meetings are not only a way to discuss with the County Commissioners about how funds allocated through the county to RSVP of the RRV impact area seniors, but it is also an opportunity for the counties to learn about RSVP of the RRV strategic plans for the upcoming year.

RSVP of the RRV employs several methods to assess performance for both clients and volunteers. Annual surveys of clients that utilize RSVP programs are administered to measure the outcomes of volunteer services. Outcome based work plans are used to measure the impact of RSVP of the RRV volunteers and our programs. Volunteer Reporter is a program that is utilized to track and record volunteer hours as well as establishes a primary volunteer assignment for new volunteers. This program is also useful in indicating the impact of recorded volunteer hours broken down on various levels. The Advisory Council serving RSVP of the RRV plays an important role in assessing RSVP of the RRV's strategic plan and objectives. The project Director and Program Coordinator annually plan strategic objectives and impact for the next year. RSVP of the RRV analyze program strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as well as develop goals and objectives that address each are for performance measures.

Organizational Capability

RSVP of the RRV embraces a long standing history in Northwest Minnesota since 1974. The

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University of Minnesota Crookston has proudly served as the sponsoring organization for over 39 years and remains supportive with RSVP of the RRV's strategic plans to provide volunteer efforts throughout the region. The University's service learning emphasis and student volunteer program are highly successful and has resulted in worthwhile and meaningful connections with local communities.

The University Minnesota system's Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA) office manages grant funded resources and financial reporting. The SPA office, the Principal Grant Investigator, Contract Administrator, and an Accountant oversee RSVP funds awarded through CNCS therefore ensuring financial accountability thus efficient and effective use of allotted resources. Financial reporting is directed through the University of Minnesota Crookston's business office to the Sponsored Financial Reporting office, which reports to CNCS. The University of Minnesota utilizes Enterprise Financial System-Peoplesoft, a thorough system that provides easily accessible tracking, monitoring and efficient records submission/approval processes to all involved in grant administration and reporting. In addition to fiscal management support received through SPA and the University of Minnesota Crookston, the University and the Crookston campus proved additional support resources. The RSVP of the RRV office is located in Owen Hall. This office space is provided as an in-kind resource to the RSVP program. The RSVP Director and Coordinator have an office suite, telephone lines, and local area network (LAN) for effective communication. The office is provided with computers, printers, and is fully furnished also provided in-kind by the University. The campus' computer help desk provides technical support as needed; these indirect costs are waived by the University. RSVP of the RRV also receives discounted office supplies as a way to ensure optimal use of funds. The University of Minnesota Crookston also allows RSVP of the RRV to utilize the in house printing department which RSVP utilizes for promotional materials, brochures, and newsletters for volunteers. This service is provided at a significantly reduced cost compared to public printing businesses.

Like other departments at the University of Minnesota Crookston, RSVP of the RRV adheres to the University of Minnesota purchasing policies as well as policies regulated by the sponsor. The University of Minnesota purchasing processes insure integrity, economy, efficiency, and accountability; provide sourcing, bidding, and troubleshooting assistance to University of Minnesota colleges and departments; and ensure responsibility to the University of Minnesota stakeholders (i.e., general business community, targeted group businesses, citizens of Minnesota, etc.) is considered in all purchasing policies and practices. The University of Minnesota Crookston employs the RSVP of the RRV Program Director and Program Coordinator. When the RSVP of the RRV program has employment needs/opportunities, enquiries regarding salary, fringe and benefits, an employment

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specialist in the Office of Human Resources provides assistance.

An additional benefit from the University of Minnesota Crookston, which also allows for financial stewardship for RSVP of the RRV, is the use and access to University owned vehicles whenever possible. When traveling, staff adheres to the more restrictive policy applicable when sponsored funds define travel requirements as well. As University of Minnesota Crookston employees, RSVP of the RRV staff is expected to choose the least costly method of transportation and lodging that meets the travelers scheduling and business needs. Use of the University's preferred travel agencies and vendors is also encouraged to ensure fiscal responsibility. All travel expenses incurred by employees must be substantiated and documented in accordance to University of Minnesota policy and applicable by federal and state laws.

RSVP of the RRV has experienced turn-over with Project Directors over the past three years. With the retirement of long time Project Director, and the resignation of previous Director who also served as the Program Coordinator for 7 years, a new Project Director began in April of 2013. A goal throughout the next year will be to establish succession planning within the RSVP of the RRV project office in order to ensure that organizational goals and projects continue to move forward despite turn-over of staff in the past few years. RSVP of the RRV employs a small office of 2 highly talented and motivated individuals who bring innovative ideas with a keen eye for crucial needs within area communities. RSVP of the RRV's Project Director brings 4 years of experience working with senior citizens. The Project Director holds a Bachelors of Science from Minnesota State University Moorhead and is actively pursuing a Masters of Business Administration from the University of Mary. Prior to accepting the Project Director position with RSVP of the RRV, she founded the Villa St. Vincent Senior Wellness Center for local seniors as well as launched a falls prevention program on the Villa St. Vincent Campus in Crookston, MN. The Project Director currently serves as an active member of the following boards; Red Lake County Committee on Aging, Polk County Committee on Aging, Crookston United Way, Polk County Senior Providers, and TRIAD. The Project Director's duties include adherence to and administers personnel policies and procedures for program staff consistent with those of the sponsor and with the recommendations of the RSVP Advisory Council. Formulates strategic plans and implements recruitment, orientation and placement of volunteers; as well as approves the assignments of volunteers, providing continuous contact with and assistance to RSVP volunteer stations. Also the Project Director assists to Develop Partnership Agreements and other appropriate documents with volunteer stations in cooperation with the RSVP sponsor; and maintains and develops cooperative working relationship with a variety of community organizations and

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agencies. The Project Director of RSVP of the RRV also helps to evaluate the effectiveness of operational procedures and program activities; attends Corporation for National and Community Service training programs and other appropriate meetings and conferences on aging, volunteerism, fundraising, and related fields. The Program Coordinator of RSVP of the RRV holds a B.A. from North Dakota State University and several years' experience as a Program Coordinator for respite care with Lutheran Social Services. She actively strives to better the lives of area community members. She has a passion for education and founded one of RSVP of the RRV's signature programs known as Reading Buddies which promotes literacy skills for children within community schools.

The Project Director of RSVP of the RRV position is an 80 percent position. Due to budget reductions, the Project Director's position was reduced from fulltime to 75 percent in 2012, however was increase to 80 percent time in 2013. RSVP of the RRV strives to continue to operate a quality and substantial program.

Other

No other information necessary.

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

Not applicable at this time.