

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties has been sponsored locally for 35 years by The Senior Source, Senior Citizens of Greater Dallas, a non-profit organization providing services to older adults in the greater Dallas area since 1961. The agency houses nine programs focused on meeting the needs of senior adults. The mission of The Senior Source is to improve the quality of life of older adults in the greater Dallas area through protection, eldercare, advocacy, volunteerism and employment services. An estimated 1,400 RSVP volunteers will serve through this project. Some of their activities will include tutoring at-risk elementary school children in public schools to improve literacy; providing home maintenance and repair services to homebound older adults and individuals with disabilities; maintaining and sustaining the operation of emergency feeding programs through unloading deliveries of food, stocking shelves and verifying client criteria for program participation; and refurbishing donated computers for visually challenged adults.

The primary focus of this project is Healthy Futures. At the end of the three-year grant: 1,980 homebound or older adults and/or individuals with disabilities will report having increased social ties/perceived social support resulting from RSVP services; 6,703 individuals throughout Dallas and Collin counties will report increased food security for themselves and/or their children (household food security) as a result of RSVP volunteers' supported services; 283 elementary school students, who have been tutored by RSVP volunteers, will improve their academic performance in literacy and/or math; 129 elementary school students, who were mentored by RSVP volunteers, will demonstrate improved academic engagement; 49,944 service hours will be reported in disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and/or recovery. The CNCS Federal investment of \$185,673 will be supplemented by \$106,000.

## Strengthening Communities

RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties serves two large areas. The counties, while adjoined geographically, are unique in character and composition.

Dallas County, the ninth largest county in the United States, is a growing and thriving area, home to both Fortune 500 and Fortune 1000 companies, and also home to the second largest population without health insurance in the nation. The County population has increased over 20% since 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, and is estimated at almost 2.5 million as of 2012. Most of the

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County's growth occurred in the suburbs, with the City of Dallas population increasing less than 1%. The County occupies 871.28 square miles with 2,718 residents per square mile.

Dallas County includes 17 Independent School Districts with over 445,000 students, of which 378,250, or 84%, were eligible for free/reduced-price meals during the 2012-2013 school year. During the summer and after-school, only 10% of those children continue to have access to healthy meals, according to North Texas Food Bank (NTFB). In June 2013, the NTFB rated the food insecurity of Dallas County at 21% and among children at 27%. Food insecurity is defined by Feeding America, a national non-profit organization, as the condition of being unable to provide adequate food for a healthy life for all members of a household due to lack of money or other resources.

Dallas County has been a magnet for corporate headquarters and major company operations, attracting 18 Fortune 500 company headquarters and nearly 40 Fortune 1000 company headquarters. The unemployment rate of 8.00% is lower than the national rate, but 33% of the workforce is employed in minimum wage or low paying jobs. The median household income is \$48,942, but 45% of County residents who are "food insecure" earn too much money to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) support. Recently, the Corporation for Enterprise Development released the results of a study that showed nearly 40% of Dallas residents live in asset poverty. They would not have enough wealth to sustain themselves in the event of a medical emergency or job loss.

The people of the County also reflect diversity. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, respondents self-identified as 32% white; 23% Black or African American; 39% Hispanic or Latino; 6% Asian; and others reporting two or more races. Over 35% of the population is under 18 years of age. Seniors over 60 years old make up 12% and 11% of them are living below the poverty level. Twenty-three percent of Dallas County residents are foreign born. Life expectancy for males in Dallas County is 76 years and for females, 81 years. Over 76% of the population has a high school education or over and 28% have college degrees. United Way of Metropolitan Dallas reports that as the population of Dallas County continues to grow, so too does the poor population. As the demographic composition of the region changes, the instances of poverty also change, particularly because the populations of more impoverished subgroups are often increasing at higher rates than the rest of the population.

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Located to the north of Dallas County, Collin County is listed by the U.S. Census Bureau as the 13th fastest growing county in the nation. With an estimated 74 people moving into Collin County each day, the population is estimated at 812,226 and expected to reach 1.2 million by 2030. The County covers 848 square miles.

Not only is Collin County one of the fastest growing, it is also one of the most affluent areas in the north Texas region, driven by the growth of corporate headquarters and major company operations for leading technology firms and well-known consumer brands. The County is home to Fortune 1000 firms J.C. Penney Company, Inc., Dr Pepper Snapple Group, and Torchmark Corporation and several other major firms including Frito-Lay America, Inc. However, the cost of living is higher than the average for the rest of the nation, as are utilities and overall expenses. Although the area has an unemployment rate below 10% and a high median income of \$82,237, Feeding America states that 119,400 of Collin County residents are food insecure, as are 18% of the children in the county.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, respondents self-identified as 62% white; 9% Black or African American; 15% Hispanic or Latino; 12% Asian; and others reporting two or more races. Almost 35% of the population is under 18 years of age. Seniors over 60 make up 13% of the population with 7% of them living below the poverty level. Life expectancy for males in Collin County is 81 years and for females, 83 years.

A study by the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program reported in the Dallas Morning News on May 20, 2013, stated people living below the poverty level - \$22,000 for a family of four -- have surged into the suburbs in most major metropolitan areas at a rate more than twice that of urban centers. In the Dallas Metropolitan area, the number of poor people living in the suburbs has more than doubled between 2000 and 2011. The number increased 111% and was the 12th highest rate of the 95 metropolitan areas in the survey. The study concluded that the numbers signal a geographic shift for people living in poverty, one that isn't likely to change.

Dallas and Collin counties can expect a 73% population increase among adults 60+ by 2020, according to the 2011-2013 Texas State Plan on Aging, developed by the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services. Based on state and local research in the Dallas and Collin counties' service areas, the Texas State Plan outlines community ties, ability to obtain quality services and support and

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perceived social connections as vital components to older adults and persons with disabilities aging well. This includes the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services and area non-profits relying on RSVP volunteers as stated in the plan.

With the rapid growth experienced and anticipated in both counties, there will be an increased need for services provided by food banks/pantries; organizations providing home repair and maintenance to low income and disabled individuals; availability of easily accessed food; organizations protecting the highly vulnerable senior population; and clinics, hospitals and other health related organizations. Therefore, to best serve the residents, RSVP Dallas and Collin Counties has chosen Healthy Futures as our Primary Focus Area concentrating on service activities relating to "Aging in Place," "Obesity and Food," and "Access to Care."

The Texas State Plan on Aging identified as a key goal: "To enable seniors to remain in their own homes with high quality of life for as long as possible through the provision of home and community-based services, including supports for family caregivers."

According to a recent study conducted by AARP, a majority of Americans over 45 expect, in the event long-term services and supports are needed, they will receive them in their own homes, with the help of an aide or medical professional. With the combination of overall population growth and more adults entering the "senior" age category, services enabling individuals to remain in their homes longer will not only be in high demand but will provide a more affordable and acceptable option to moving into an assisted living or nursing home facility. Volunteer organizations that provide major and minor home repair and maintenance services can help a senior adult remain at home for a few more years in comfortable and familiar surroundings, and may contribute to a longer life. In a sample of nursing home residents who died between 1992 and 2006, a full 80% had passed away within one year of their admission to the nursing home, according to a study in the September 2010, Journal of the American Geriatrics Society. Roughly 75% of respondents to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs 2001 Needs Survey said there is a "major need for assistance with repair and rehabilitation of their existing housing." The need for a program for emergency home repair for homeowners with special needs, older adults and the disabled has been recognized and recommended for development to the Dallas City Council for consideration. RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties' volunteer stations, Plain-O Helpers, First Richardson Helpers, Fix-It Folks and Dallas Ramps, all

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provide the services of home maintenance and repair services to senior adults and disabled individuals that were recommended to the Dallas City Council. These programs provide maintenance and repair services for the home, with a key focus on safety issues. Some services provided are in response to city yard code violations. The services provided by the RSVP volunteers, such as putting in grab bars in bathrooms, building handicap ramps built onto homes and the installation of blinking lights instead of door bells for deaf residents, not only make life easier but safer for senior adults. In 2012, one Plano volunteer station reported serving 494 clients, working on 1,501 projects and contributing more than 6,200 hours of service. This station, due to the efforts of the volunteers, reported being able to serve 11% more clients than in the previous year. Twelve of the volunteers serving in these programs are veterans.

A side benefit of the home repair and maintenance volunteer groups is the social contact the service provides to the clients. Whenever possible, volunteers are reassigned to the same clients to help develop a sense of community and consistency. Some comments from grateful clients reflecting this aspect of their service include: "Your willingness to help a complete stranger with all the loving care, expertise and many, many hours of your precious free time has overwhelmed me. It not only has helped me tremendously, but has also lifted my spirits..." Another client commented that the volunteers "gave me hope and the encouragement that I will be able to survive without my soul mate who died a few months ago." Social isolation, or lack of a social support system, is one of the factors identified by the North Central Texas Council of Governments that places an individual at risk of institutional placement. While not easily quantified, human contact is powerful medicine. Services providing either direct face-to-face contact or regular telephone check-ups help alleviate isolation.

Another service that provides senior adults with social interaction is the "Caring Caller" program. This program is unique because it unites and benefits two isolated senior adult groups: the homebound individuals receiving the calls and the volunteers making the calls, most of whom are homebound themselves. Socially isolated seniors are disengaged from their families and peers and are likely not volunteering their time to contribute to their communities. When examining seniors' social isolation from a lost opportunity perspective, it takes on additional significance. From a societal perspective, when seniors are isolated and do not volunteer, the community is losing out on their valuable contributions. The "Volunteering and Civic Life in America" 2011 report by the Corporation for National and Community Service found that 27% of older adults in the Dallas area are engaged in

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volunteer work. Considering the degree to which seniors volunteer, the negative impact of seniors' social isolation should be seen as an issue for the entire community. RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties' "Caring Caller" volunteers are trained by social workers in The Senior Source's Elder Support Program to make weekly calls from their own homes to homebound elderly clients. The volunteers go through an extensive background check and are trained to be alert to any "red flag" statements that may indicate the need for a follow-up visit by the staff.

RSVP volunteers of Dallas and Collin Counties serving in the "Computers for the Blind" program adapt computers to meet the needs of the blind and enable visually impaired individuals to independently conduct the activities of daily living. As technology access is now the doorway to services, disabled individuals who have technologically adapted equipment can lead a more fulfilling, independent and socially connected life. Volunteers pick up donated computers, cleanse the hardware for security purposes, configure the hardware and software, perform tests of functionality, then package and ship the computers to pre-selected visually impaired recipients. As of July 2013, they had shipped over 5,800 refurbished computers since the organization's inception in 1995 -- providing an individual with a refurbished computer at the rate of almost one per day. Follow-ups throughout the year are also part of the volunteer's service and a bond of trust and friendship is established between the client and the volunteer. This program has three veterans participating as volunteers.

Other RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties' volunteer programs, such as the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), help prevent vulnerable seniors from becoming victims of financial scams by contributing to overall consumer awareness and increased knowledge. The 2011-2013 Area Plan from the Area Agency on Aging of North Central Texas cites a lack of understanding by older persons about health care options as a critical shortcoming in the area. According to the report, 70% of older adults are at risk of being misinformed or scammed due to their lack of health care understanding. In 2012, Dallas had the dubious distinction of being the home of the largest Medicare fraud scheme investigators had ever uncovered: a \$375 million home health care scam. The SMP program empowers seniors by increasing awareness and understanding of health care programs. In 2012, trained RSVP SMP volunteers gave presentations to 1,325 Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers throughout Dallas and Collin counties. SMP volunteer, Richard Hotinski, a retired CPA, actively reviews Medicare statements of clients in The Senior Source's Guardianship Program. Because of his awareness and diligence, he prevented several of the clients from becoming Medicare fraud statistics. Mr. Hotinski

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was recognized nationally in 2010 as one of the nation's top ten Senior Medicare Patrol volunteers.

Additional trained volunteers through RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties serve in The Senior Source's Guardianship Program and provide important safeguards in preventing financial scams on a very vulnerable population. Guardianship is a legal process used to provide protection for adults who are incapacitated, as defined by the Texas Probate Code. The Probate Code defines an incapacitated person as: "an adult individual who, because of a physical or mental condition, is substantially unable to provide food, clothing, or shelter to himself or herself, to care for the individual's own physical health, or to manage the individual's own financial affairs." Both Dallas and Collin counties and the local Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) report waiting lists for guardianship services. Research conducted by the Collaborative Committee for the Caruth Senior Safety Planning grant at The Senior Source, estimates that approximately 1,000 older adults are currently in guardianship programs in Dallas County. Out of this number, 140 are guardianship clients of The Senior Source. DADS contracts guardianship services through The Senior Source's program, and RSVP volunteers are an important part of providing that service. A plan and goals are developed for each client by the staff and volunteer guardians and is updated regularly and evaluated annually. The Guardianship Program reported that 83% of the guardianship clients were over the age of 65 and had, with the help of the RSVP volunteers, completed at least 92% of the service plan goals identified by their guardians during the last year. Careful monitoring and evaluation of each case is essential to provide the physical and financial safety of each person.

Feeding America released the 3rd Annual Feeding America "Map the Meal Gap" report on June 10, 2013, and concluded that Texas has the second highest food insecurity rate in the United States with 20% of Texans food insecure. The study further identified 8% of Texas seniors as food insecure with the number to increase by 50% when the youngest of the Baby Boomers reaches age 60 in 2025. At least 30% of senior households assessed reported having to choose between food and paying for heat and utilities.

A local organization, Mesquite Social Services, recently reported that one in every four children lives in food insecure households in Dallas County. "The number of individuals who access food pantries in Dallas County could fill the new Dallas Cowboy Stadium (that seats 80,000 people) two-and-a-half times each month." Feeding America's "Map the Meal Gap" reports 36% of residents in Dallas and

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Collin counties are food insecure; 45% of children experience food insecurity; and 85% of food insecure families are above the poverty line. Those who do not qualify for federal food and nutrition assistance programs must rely on charitable donations and food banks or pantries.

Texas Food Bank Network and Texas Hunger Initiative found in 2012 that families and individuals experiencing food insecurity contributed 60% of their own money toward food, and even after applying federal or state benefits, families and individuals still averaged a 23% gap between their resources and the United States Department of Agriculture standard to be food secure. In Dallas and Collin counties, food insecure families lack \$412.00 to bring them to the level of food secure after using their own money and federal aid, as reported in the "Map the Meal Gap" study by Feeding America.

Dallas and Collin counties have a combined 93 food banks and pantries in the service areas. RSVP partners with 20 of the food banks and pantries and volunteers serve at some of the largest food programs. RSVP volunteers contributed more than 24,500 hours of service at food banks, pantries and social service agencies to help meet the rising demand of hungry residents. The North Texas Food Bank has served more than 47 million meals to date, and distributes emergency food boxes monthly in Dallas, Collin and Rockwall counties, serving 800 families and 2,000 individuals. North Texas Food Bank also supports access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP addresses the needs of low-income Texas families and is one of the nation's most important defenses against hunger. Sixty-five percent of Texans are below the SNAP threshold of 165% poverty.

CitySquare is the third largest food sponsor in Texas, and it serves both Dallas and Collin counties. In the summer of 2012, CitySquare's "Food on the Move" mobile food program served 768,000 meals to 14,000 children twice a day. Children participating in Food on the Move get 45 minutes of enrichment activity, usually sports or arts and crafts, with support from RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties. These activities have led to over 1,100 children receiving the President's Active Lifestyle Award for completing six weeks of regular physical activity. "Food on the Move's" 2013 summer program expanded to include literacy activities and nutrition classes to teach children and their parents how to plan, budget and cook healthy, affordable meals. RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties provided volunteer support for "Food on the Move" nutrition classes this summer, with plans to expand the program support to other CitySquare programs in the fall.

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RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties serves Healthy Futures stations with priority volunteer placement in the service activities that address food insecurity. In 2012, food insecure residents in Dallas and Collin counties totaled 553,180.

The number of residents who lack health insurance creates significant problems in the financing and delivery of health care to all Americans. Those who lack insurance coverage typically have far-worse health status than their insured counterparts and put increased demands on access to health care systems. The Texas Medical Association ranked Texas, with 33% of the population without health insurance, as number one in the nation in the overall number of uninsured. Thirty-one percent of Dallas County residents are uninsured and Collin County residents have a 17% uninsured rate.

RSVP volunteers of Dallas and Collin Counties regularly volunteer throughout the two-county area serving in hospitals and clinics, many of which partner with the Dallas County Medical Society's efforts to serve the poor. These volunteers are a vital part of the chain that supplies healthcare information to the growing elderly, poverty stricken and uninsured population. The volunteers assemble and distribute information packets on various health related topics, such as when and where to receive immunization services for newborn infants and children; warning signs of cancer; or the benefits of following healthy living practices. The RSVP volunteers are there to alleviate some of the strain on the over-burdened health care system.

Another issue being addressed by the RSVP volunteers of Dallas and Collin Counties is the number of veterans who are homeless. More than one million veterans are at risk of becoming homeless, while tens of thousands of former service members are already living without shelter, according to the Center For American Progress, a public policy research and advocacy organization. In addition to the complex set of factors influencing all homelessness -- extreme shortage of affordable housing, livable income and access to health care -- a large number of displaced and at-risk veterans live with lingering effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse, which are compounded by a lack of family and social support networks.

The recently opened Veterans Resource Center, located in Dallas, provides services and resources for newly returning veterans, some of whom are homeless and living out of their cars. In Dallas, the

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number of homeless veterans was reported as 1,150 by Neighborsgo, a localized publication of the Dallas Morning News, in April 2010. Since 1987, the Veterans' Administration's programs have emphasized collaboration with community service providers to help expand services to more veterans in crisis. Volunteers with RSVP of Dallas and Collin counties regularly serve at the Veterans' Resource Center and were instrumental in initially setting up the facility for reception and meeting areas, office spaces, clothing donation rooms, food pantries and workout areas. Volunteers have also helped support the homeless by setting up and contributing to donation drives of hygiene items, then gathering, sorting and assembling those items in backpacks to be distributed at the Veterans Resource Center or nearby Dallas VA Medical Center. The upcoming Dallas Homeless Stand Down on November 8, 2013, will find many RSVP volunteers participating in donation drives, assembling and packaging donated items, distributing resources and helping in other areas to support the event. The annual Stand Down event is a grassroots, community-based intervention program designed to help Dallas' homeless combat life on the streets.

A good communication process is essential to acquire and support an effective data collection system. RSVP staff is in frequent contact with both the stations and the volunteers serving at the stations. The new focus areas for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) provide RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties the opportunity to develop specifically targeted Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) geared to each service category. Each outcome driven MOU clearly defines the information needed from the volunteer station for RSVP to fulfill its commitment to providing accurate statistical data. In some cases, modified CNCS surveys are also supplied to the stations to assist them. The MOU also lists the CNCS prohibited activities to keep all volunteer activities in compliance with regulations, the signature on the MOU by the volunteer station representative acknowledges the station is aware of and will abide by the outlined process and regulations. Data and hours from stations and volunteers are collected on a monthly basis by an assigned RSVP staff member and inputted into the volunteer management database.

### **Recruitment and Development**

RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties annually survey volunteers to assess job satisfaction, areas of interest, trends in volunteers' time, schedule preferences, communication preferences, opportunities for growth, satisfaction with station supervisor, and other questions applicable to prevalent changes throughout the year. The results from the survey, combined with custom matching volunteers' skills and interest, assist staff from RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties with seeking impactful volunteer

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opportunities that generate meaningful experiences for RSVP volunteers. A common survey response from 2012 was that prospective and current RSVP volunteers are increasingly seeking part-time employment to supplement their post-retirement income. This change has resulted in an increase in the number of worthwhile short-term, weekend, flexible, and one-time volunteer assignments RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties' volunteers request.

A sample of a new, critical weekend volunteer job is the opportunity for RSVP volunteers with a health care background to serve as Children's Health Registration Assistants with the Community Council of Greater Dallas registering area children for Children's Medicaid or CHIP prior to and at the beginning of the school year. Area supermarkets serve as registration sites throughout Dallas County. RSVP volunteers participate in a short training and are then prepared to navigate families through the process of accessing health care for their children. RSVP volunteers can experience tangible results from their efforts in this role by serving just a few hours on a Saturday.

Preferences of age 55 and over RSVP volunteers in Dallas and Collin counties include opportunities to connect and form new and purposeful relationships, learning and growth forums, flexible schedules, diverse and quality volunteer options, chances to contribute to the community in a meaningful way, and intentional opportunities to be a partner in their volunteer experience. One example includes two RSVP Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) volunteers who began giving community presentations on how to protect, detect and report suspicious Medicare activity to vulnerable Medicare recipients. These RSVP volunteers applied their knowledge and skills from their backgrounds in human resources and higher education to emerge as volunteer leaders, who are now SMP facilitators training new RSVP Senior Medicare Patrol volunteers over the course of three-day seminars.

RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties specifies in the Memorandum of Understanding that organizations must provide orientation and training concerning the station and volunteer assignment to RSVP staff and senior volunteers. Generally, RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties regularly communicates in person, by phone or electronically with station partners about required volunteer trainings and supplemental trainings to ensure that volunteers are adequately prepared to fulfill their roles. RSVP supports the coordination of training by providing the space and transportation to RSVP volunteers to generate more opportunities for volunteers to be effective and successful in their assignments. All RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties partner organizations with a Memorandum of

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Understanding offer standard and/or advanced trainings for RSVP volunteers in the primary focus area of Healthy Futures and Other Focus Areas.

For example, the Caring Callers program matches RSVP volunteers with one or more frail or isolated seniors 60 or older to call weekly for companionship. RSVP volunteers are oriented and trained in standard operating procedures such as privacy matters, logging calls and the report process. Second, RSVP volunteers are trained by licensed social workers to listen and ask questions if they hear certain words, phrases or any other points of concern that may indicate the senior is unsafe or in some type of trouble. Volunteers follow a reporting procedure to alert the senior's caseworker and adequately document their phone conversations. RSVP volunteers are frequently monitored and offered supplemental trainings to better meet both their needs and the needs of the older adults.

Furthermore, RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties will partner with stations or community organizations such as the American Red Cross, CitySquare, local police departments, and the Better Business Bureau quarterly or as needed, to provide trainings or learning and growth forums centered on the primary focus area of Healthy Futures and Other Focus Areas. Anticipated trainings include understanding solutions to poverty and social welfare, Medicare and Medicaid fraud, disaster preparedness, and power tool or personal protection equipment safety practices for home repair among others.

RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties utilizes a five-prong recruitment approach to attract diverse prospective RSVP volunteers 55 and over reflective of our service areas. This includes current RSVP volunteers, local businesses and chambers of commerce, community organizations such as churches and schools, RSVP hosted events including Explore Your Future or community engagement expos, and station partners. The recruitment plan is executed by all RSVP staff with one staff member as the lead recruiter. Additionally, RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties participates in multiple community programs, initiatives, boards, volunteer support organizations, and forms strategic partnerships throughout Dallas and Collin counties working toward diversifying the RSVP volunteer membership.

A relationship purposely developed to better promote RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties within the Hispanic and Latino population, comprising 54% of the service area, is with the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). LULAC has eagerly engaged with RSVP of Dallas and Collin

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Counties to both provide volunteer opportunities to Latino adults and expose the community at-large to the significance of Latino culture and issues within the communities of Dallas and Collin counties.

Another example includes collaborating with the Dallas Area Habitat for Humanity VISTA VetCorps, a nationwide and local initiative to serve the needs of veterans by providing homeownership possibilities and volunteer opportunities to veterans. Currently, 10% of the RSVP volunteer membership is veterans, and this number is growing because of increased opportunities with new veterans stations such as Veterans Resource Center and Allies in Service.

Overall, RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties utilizes a variety of communication approaches to recruit adults 55 and over in the primary focus area of Healthy Futures, as well as Other Focus Areas, through presentations, phone contact, direct mail, electronic communications, flyers or profile cards, social media, professional networking events, print media, targeted community activities, and public bulletin boards. Other resources used to advertise and recruit for RSVP include chambers of commerce, local businesses with a high 50 and over patron population, 50 and over groups through community college programs, community engagement expos, online volunteer match sites, local volunteer centers, volunteer fairs, station email blasts, station tours, partnership promotional materials, and current RSVP volunteers, among other methods. Basic recruiting efforts reflect a current RSVP volunteer membership of 35% in Healthy Futures.

RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties works diligently to provide a personalized service based on individual volunteer needs and fosters volunteer relationships for years to come through retention and recognition efforts. On average, 29% of current RSVP volunteers have remained members of RSVP for 10 or more years. The retention strategy involves many components that include regular contact with volunteers, proper training and education, ongoing personal and professional support, rewarding volunteer assignments, individualized volunteer development plans as needed, and volunteer appreciation celebrations. Upon joining RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties, volunteers receive a welcome letter and subsequent follow-up phone calls or volunteer site visits at one month of service, three months of service, six months of service, and one year of service. After one year of service, volunteers are intentionally contacted two to four times a year.

RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties recognizes volunteers in countless ways that include birthday and

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volunteer anniversary emails or phone calls, media interviews and publications, incentive programs, milestones, small group appreciation lunches or community outings and more. One of the favored methods of recognition includes the chance to be featured as the Volunteer Spotlight in RSVP's monthly email highlighting volunteer opportunities, sent to more than 2,000 recipients. Nominations typically come from station volunteer coordinators or RSVP staff. RSVP volunteers chosen for the Spotlight share parts of their life and volunteer experiences, including how volunteering brings purpose to their life. Some other favorite appreciation activities include RSVP staff attending station volunteer recognition functions to provide "extra" rewards to RSVP volunteers, free tickets to sports games and special functions, or discounts and previews from local businesses, sponsors and community partner stations. RSVP volunteers of Dallas and Collin counties learn about most appreciation events and other RSVP news through email marketing.

### **Program Management**

For new stations, RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties proactively seeks highly desirable volunteer positions by assessing several factors, including the station's mission, how the station's programs align with National Performance Measures, if the station can successfully meet all of the required criteria and safety protocol, if the station is willing and able to produce output and outcome data that supports the collaboration, and, among other considerations, if the volunteer roles at the station will motivate adults 55 and over to share their experiences, abilities and skills for inspirational work in their communities. Upon agreement of a mutually beneficial partnership between RSVP and the station, a completed Memorandum of Understanding that outlines prohibited activities and station expectations is signed. Also, one-on-one or group station orientations and periodic station site visits, along with regular electronic communication, are conducted to strengthen the terms of the collaboration over the next three years. All of the necessary paperwork is completed before RSVP volunteers are assigned to the non-profit station.

Similarly, RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties uses a hands-on management method for current station partnerships. Station summits, planned and periodic drop-in station site visits, and regular electronic communication are all used to strengthen the terms of the collaboration over the three year partnership as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding. Monthly emails are sent to station representatives conveying pertinent RSVP news, reminders, information on volunteer trends, and other topics to keep stations informed of RSVP functions and supports. Bi-annually, both station volunteer coordinators and volunteers are surveyed by phone on volunteer assignments, job

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performance and satisfaction. Also, each RSVP staff member is required to perform five station site visits a month, with one extended visit a month to shadow RSVP volunteers while they are working. Comprehensive station site visits give RSVP staff the opportunity to evaluate the actual volunteer job, working conditions, day-to-day station activities, and interactions of volunteers with station staff.

More recently, with the streamlined National Performance Measure requirements, RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties reviewed active stations and the volunteer jobs at each station to determine the feasibility of those partnerships moving forward. Between RSVP volunteer preferences and the National Performance Measure requirements, staff has identified approximately 95 stations to graduate for not meeting a significant community need or aligning with new performance measures. Prior to formal station graduation, RSVP will work with each station to determine if there are volunteer assignments that could be developed in a focus area. This process has already provided greater opportunity for high-level volunteer assignments that will allow RSVP volunteers to showcase their skills not only in the focus area of Healthy Futures, but also the other focus areas such as Education or Capacity Building and Leverage.

Ongoing communication with RSVP stations in regard to program changes has occurred over the last few months and will continue through individual meetings, electronic communication, letters and phone interactions. Many of the stations slated for graduation were served by RSVP group volunteers who assembled packets or station giveaways at hospice organizations or crisis centers, for example. The stations that have been informed of graduation were receptive and supportive of RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties program changes. For all stations designated to graduate, RSVP will continue to assist with their volunteer needs through the end of the current grant cycle. Group volunteers are looking forward to more diverse and challenging service opportunities related to RSVP's primary focus area of Healthy Futures, Other Focus Areas, and Capacity Building and Leverage activities.

RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties is strongly represented in the selected focus area of Healthy Futures, with 35% of unduplicated RSVP volunteers engaged in one or more Corporation for National and Community Service recognized service activities. One-third of RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties' station partnerships represent the primary focus area of Healthy Futures. More than a dozen of the Healthy Futures station partners in the primary focus area are leaders in the social service

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industry within the Dallas Metropolitan area. Presently, RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties collects data from each station based on the information stations collect for their own purposes. In addition, RSVP surveys stations on the number of volunteer hours served, number of clients served and if RSVP volunteers contributed to expansion of station services. Moving forward, RSVP will collaborate with station partners to obtain data based on the Corporation for National and Community Service sample instruments related to the stations' focus area. RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties will provide an instrument to stations or RSVP volunteers to acquire the National Performance Measures outcome data.

RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties is currently restructuring the Advisory Council to include a stronger representation of the service areas, influential station staff from the primary focus area of Healthy Futures, volunteer leaders, and other community members who have the knowledge and skills to support RSVP functions. RSVP Advisory Council meetings are held quarterly and as needed, to review ongoing business, evaluate program operations, provide guidance on local and national changes, and support the overall mission of the sponsor agency. RSVP Advisory Council members are trained and informed of RSVP happenings through regular electronic communication between Advisory Council meetings.

Each month, staff is assigned to extract Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) data from RSVP's Maverick database to review MOUs soon to expire. Each MOU renewal letter includes a return date, and once mailed, station staff is emailed and told to expect MOU renewal information. One week follow up phone calls are made to the identified station staff to verify receipt of the MOU renewal information. RSVP of Dallas and Collin Counties pursues MOU renewal letters until they are returned. A new RSVP volunteer would not be placed at a station with an expired Memorandum of Understanding.

A volunteer interview is scheduled when new RSVP volunteer applications are received. During the interview, paperwork is completed, including driver's license verification of the volunteer's age and address. New RSVP volunteers are not placed in a volunteer assignment at a station until paperwork is finished and signed by both the RSVP volunteer and staff.

### **Organizational Capability**

For the past 35 years, The Senior Source has been the local sponsor of RSVP. The Senior Source has

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provided services to older adults since 1961, serving approximately 30,000 older adults each year. The mission of the sponsor agency is to improve the quality of life for older adults in the greater Dallas area through protection, eldercare, advocacy, volunteerism, and employment services.

Molly H. Bogen, LMSW, is the Executive Director of The Senior Source, a position she has held since 1976. Katie Dickinson, LMSW, is the Associate Executive Director, and she has also been the Director of Dallas Foster Grandparent Program. The Director of Programs is Renae Perry, LMSW. She has been at the sponsoring agency for 18 years and previously worked in both RSVP and as Director of the Senior Companion Program. She is responsible for the oversight of all nine agency programs, including the three Senior Corps programs. The agency's Director of Finance, Sandra Landers, has been with The Senior Source for over 23 years and is responsible for financial grant management and compliance; budget analysis and preparation; and administration of federal, state and local governmental funding.

Diane Maguire has been the Director of RSVP for two years and previously served in RSVP as the Individuals and Special Projects Coordinator for three years. Ms. Maguire has 15 years experience in communications, marketing, public relations and volunteer recruitment. She has a BA degree in Public Relations and Journalism. Julie Krawczyk, Program Coordinator, has been with RSVP for two years. She holds a Master of Arts, Management degree and has over 10 years experience in special projects coordination. She is instrumental in volunteer station oversight, data collection, and general communication with station coordinators. Louise Watkins, Program Coordinator, has also been with RSVP two years. She brings over 15 years of teaching experience, as well as hands on experience working with older adults. She holds a Master's degree in Education and a Texas Teaching Certificate in Early Childhood. Ms. Watkins specializes in volunteer recruitment, placement and follow-up, particularly in the Education Focus Area. RSVP has one staff vacancy that will be filled this fall. This person will coordinate projects with volunteers who prefer to serve as a group in fulfilling community needs, as well as provide valuable staff support in recruiting and station engagement. RSVP also has two van drivers who provide transportation to our project group volunteers. This allows many volunteers who do not have personal transportation the opportunity for service that would otherwise be impossible.

The agency provides record-keeping and financial management oversight through the Director of

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Finance, who in turn reports to the agency's Executive Director and Finance Committee of the Board of Directors, which includes financial professionals from the community. Weaver and Tidwell, L.L.P. has issued unqualified opinions on the agency's financial statements for fifteen years, and the agency is rated as a low-risk auditee on the Federal Assistance Report. Currently, the agency administers over 20 governmental and private grants a year, in addition to managing a \$4 million building fund. The agency continues to receive the highest stewardship rating from United Way of Metropolitan Dallas.

The Senior Source manages and has extensive experience with all three of the CNCS Senior Corps grants, including Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions. The agency also manages federal Older American Act funding for the local Nursing Home Ombudsman program, senior benefits assistance, and caregiver support, as well as three federal Community Development Block Grants through Housing and Urban Development. The agency operates under fiscal policies and procedures developed by the Board's Finance Committee, and the budget is reviewed monthly.

The Senior Source is a member of the Center for Nonprofit Management, American Society on Aging, the Community Council of Greater Dallas, the Dallas Area Directors of Volunteers (DADV), and the Volunteer Center of North Texas, all of which provide training opportunities for The Senior Source staff. The agency has implemented impact-based programming for all of its nine programs. Since the Corporation for National and Community Service's inception of programming for impact, RSVP has been leading with this charge and has demonstrated success in meeting the outcomes.

The Senior Source has clearly demonstrated its commitment to RSVP through the many resources and oversight it continues to provide. As one of the nine programs at The Senior Source, RSVP is able to share the experience and expertise of the entire staff, many of whom are Master Level Social Workers and experts in the field of aging. Both clients and programs at The Senior Source benefit from having these comprehensive programs under one roof which provides a seamless transition to meet the needs of the elderly of the greater Dallas area. With the assistance of the sponsor's Director of Communications, project volunteer accomplishments are highlighted in Dallas' major daily newspaper and community publications, as well as on radio, television, social media, and in the agency video. The RSVP program is also featured and described on the agency's website and their Facebook page. The Senior Source's "green," environmentally-friendly LEED certified building provides ample office and meeting space for RSVP and its projects. The occupancy, property

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insurance and contract services at The Senior Source are valued at \$53,779 for the RSVP Program annually.

The staff must adhere to published policies and procedures, including travel guidelines, purchasing procedures, and personnel policies. In addition, staff are evaluated annually and given opportunities to attend seminars to build essential skills. The performance appraisal is comprehensive in several areas to offer staff the feedback needed for professional growth. Areas addressed in the performance appraisal are: job knowledge and performance; client/volunteer/board relations; agency interpersonal relations; media relations; verbal communication; public speaking; written communication; and attendance, punctuality, and attire. Mutually agreed upon goals are set for the upcoming year between the staff person and supervisor. A supervisor addendum is given in the performance evaluation to the RSVP Director. This addendum includes: goals and objectives, budgeting, and ability to supervise. Weekly meetings are held to track progress for exceeding goals, expanding activities, and handling concerns.

### **Other**

N/A

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

N/A