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Executive Summary

An estimated 850 unduplicated RSVP volunteers will serve in Angelina, Houston, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Newton, Polk, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Shelby, Trinity, and Tyler Counties, through partnerships with one hundred and five (105) RSVP Volunteer Stations.

Some of their activities will include: distributing nutritious food to feed the food insecure of various ages through community gardens, food pantries, and soup kitchens; providing respite services to family caregivers through adult day centers and hospices; offering independent living services (via weekly phone calls) to meals-on-wheels recipients, frail elderly, and disabled individuals through the RSVP "Ring Team;" providing tutoring to K-12 students through public schools, and after-school, summer, and service learning-programs; assisting Veterans with clinic services, transportation, and making comfort pillows for rehabilitation; garnering donations for more than seventeen (17) non-profit organizations in Deep East Texas, while also raising funds for multiple college/university scholarships and endowments; in addition to other priority services.

There are six (6) work plans (38% of volunteers) connected to the Primary Focus Area of this project; Healthy Futures. Six (6) work plans (42% of volunteers) are in the category of Other Focus Areas and Capacity Building, and one (1) work plan (20% of volunteers) speaks to Community Priorities. 10% of the Volunteers (85) are Veterans, and this project aims to serve more than 5,000 Veterans/Families.

At the end of this grant period: at least 5,600 of 7,000 individuals will report increased food security; a minimum of 75 caregivers of homebound or older adults/individuals with disabilities will receive respite services, and 200 individuals will receive independent living services (via phone contact), with 235 reporting an increase in social ties/perceived social support; teachers will report improved academic engagement of at least 85 of 100 K-12 students; 2,500 Veterans will receive necessary medical services, transportation, and/or supplies; and more than \$250,000 will be raised to enhance the capacity of seventeen (17) area non-profits, while at the same time, at least 20 area students will receive scholarships to further their education. The CNCS investment of \$77,632 will be supplemented by \$97,788 of non-federal resources.

Strengthening Communities

The Deep East Texas Region, called the Pineywoods, for its' timber industry, is comprised of 12 rural

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counties: Angelina, Houston, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Newton, Polk, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Shelby, Trinity, and Tyler (9,670 square miles). To understand how vast Deep East Texas is, there are 160 miles (2 hours and 45 minutes) between the most Northwest city (Crockett) and the most Southeast town (Deweyville). It is a two hour ride (114 miles) from the most Northeast city (Timpson) to the most Southwest city (Coldspring). It is possible that a staff member could be on the road anywhere from one hour to five and half hours on any given day; depending on the destination. This vastness is why it is imperative that RSVP staff be selected from different parts of the region; to save time, and resources. This will be explained in further detail in the "Organizational Capability" section of the narratives.

There are 380,730 residents in Deep East Texas. Lufkin is the largest city (36,009), followed by Nacogdoches (34,047), with the third largest city decreasing to 7,682 (Jasper). According to the US Census, 2012 estimates, the populace in Deep East Texas is comprised of 75% Caucasian, 14% African-American, 9% Hispanic, and 2% American-Indian. Veterans make up 32,656 people (8.6%) in the region. 64,761 persons (17%) are age 65+. According to Kids Count Data Center, public school enrollment (K-12) totals 65,197 (17.12%), with 67.46% (43,986) being free/reduced-price lunch recipients. Approximately 20.5 % or 78,000 residents are below the poverty level (BPL), and 70,100 (18.4%) are calculated to be food insecure (Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap). The average percentage of high school graduates for the region is 78.8%; lower than the state of Texas, in all but four (4) counties, and below the US average in all 12 counties. Deep East Texas "houses" Stephen F. Austin State University, Angelina Community College (with satellite locations), the Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation, and numerous lake areas that beckon to people of all ages, especially retirees.

Hubert H. Humphrey once made the statement that, "It was once said that the moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped." In keeping with this moral test, the Deep East Texas RSVP proposes to use awarded Federal funds to do just that; to aid and assist the children, the elderly, the sick, the needy, and the handicapped. Our plan follows...

The Deep East Texas RSVP anticipates that 850 Unduplicated Volunteers will be serving through one

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hundred and five (105) RSVP Volunteer Stations. There are six (6) work plans pertaining to our Primary Focus Area; Healthy Futures (320 Volunteers -- 38%). There are six (6) work plans linked to Other Focus Areas (357 Volunteers -- 42%); two (2) Education, two (2) Veterans and Military Families, one (1) Disaster Services, and one (1) Capacity Building. The remainder of the RSVP Volunteers (173 Volunteers -- 20%) will be serving through the Other Community Priorities work plan.

The 2010 US Census Report, 2012 estimates, states that 14.3% of persons in the United States are below the poverty level (BPL), 17% in Texas. Of the twelve (12) counties that comprise Deep East Texas, persons below the poverty level range from 16.6% BPL to 27.2% BPL. All of the counties have a higher BPL rank than the US percentage, and only one county (Trinity - 16.6%) ranks below the Texas percentage. The conclusion is that many people are in jeopardy of being food insecure in Deep East Texas.

According to Feeding America, 18.7% of the Texas state population is food insecure. Four (4) Deep East Texas counties rank less than or equal to that of the Texas percentage (17.4% - 18.7%) The other eight (8) counties rank higher than the state average (19.5% to 23.9%). Feeding America notes that 70,100 persons are considered to be food insecure in Deep East Texas.

Having worked with our area food pantries for many years, and surveying the recipients for the last three years, we see that the statistical data is correct and a call to continued service is required. Three (3) work plans address the issue of assisting the food insecure; Obesity and Food -- H11 -- Number of individuals getting support, education, and/or referrals for hunger (Anticipated Output -- 7,030).

Three (3) Unduplicated RSVP Volunteer will serve with one (1) community garden that will produce and distribute food to the food insecure, in San Augustine County. RSVP Volunteers will perform such tasks as: planting, gardening, harvesting, and distributing fresh produce. This is a new start-up project through the county Judge's office MOU, managed by an RSVP Volunteer.

One (1) Unduplicated RSVP Volunteer, a Master Gardner, will serve with one (1) community garden, in Nacogdoches County, to educate those that are considered to be food insecure. This Volunteer will also offer expertise to the community garden volunteers in the adjacent county (San Augustine), and

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to senior centers about creating keyhole gardens to have fresh produce available for seniors.

One hundred and eighty-five (185) Unduplicated RSVP Volunteers will serve each week at twelve (12) food pantries and two (2) soup kitchens to help alleviate long-term hunger in Deep East Texas. Those served will be: children, youth, adults, and seniors; of which some will be Veterans/Active Military. RSVP is working with our partner food pantries and soup kitchens to track the number of Veterans/Active Military served during the project. RSVP Volunteers will perform such tasks as: locating food sources; scheduling pick-ups; picking up donations from grocers, caterers, and restaurants; sorting, packing, and distributing food; interviewing clients; maintaining client files; and providing hot meals in soup kitchens.

We are using the matching H12 Priority -- Number of individuals that reported increased food security (Anticipated Outcome -- 5,620). All sixteen (16) Volunteer Stations will receive surveys, before the start of the 2014 grant year, to be completed by their participants. RSVP staff will hand-deliver these surveys in order to give full instruction of use, completion, and dates of pick-up. Station personnel and/or RSVP volunteers will assist with the completion of the surveys throughout the grant year. RSVP staff will collect the surveys before the end of the grant year for calculation prior to progress reporting. All surveys will ask, "Are you a Veteran/Active Military, or a family member of a Veteran/Active Military?" for tracking purposes.

Having conducted annual surveys over the last three years, RSVP has found that many of the Meals-On-Wheels recipients' only contact with someone is with their meal delivery driver; which they appreciate, and count on for social and safety reasons. Some of the senior centers, due to cuts in Federal and State monies, have had to go to weekly instead of 5-day a week deliveries, leaving a long gap in social interaction, and a fear that no one is checking on them to see if they are safe.

With the above in mind, the Deep East Texas RSVP, with cooperation from our senior center partners, has decided to form the RSVP "Ring Team." RSVP volunteers will call Meals-on-Wheels recipients, and other frail elderly, to check on them on days that they are not receiving a meal (at least once a week, or three times a week if food is delivered once a week). This project will increase both social ties and support for older adults and individuals with disabilities, providing them the opportunity to live independently. This project will also allow us to re-purpose some of our senior center volunteers

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whose volunteer assignments no longer align with the national priority measures.

In 2010, 340,000 persons, in Texas, age 65 and above had Alzheimer's, according to the Alzheimer's Association. All twelve (12) Deep East Texas counties have a higher percentage of 65+ residents (12.2% to 28.3%), then the Texas percentage of 10.9. Sixty-four thousand, seven hundred and sixty-one (64,761 -- 17%) residents age 65+ in Deep East Texas are at risk of needing some form of adult care services. With the aging population of Deep East Texas, and the fact that family members (primary caregivers) have to work at an older age, respite services for caregivers is becoming more necessary.

Two (2) work plans address the issue of companionship; Aging in Place -- H8 -- Number of individuals receiving independent living services (Anticipated Output -- 200), and H13 -- Caregivers of homebound or older adults/individuals with disabilities receiving respite services (Anticipated Output - - 75).

A minimum of thirty (30) Unduplicated RSVP Volunteers will work with a minimum of three (3) senior centers and the RSVP Office to provide an increase in social ties and perceived social support to: Meals-On-Wheels recipients, frail elderly, and handicapped; of which some may be Veterans, through the RSVP "Ring Team." Volunteers will make calls from their home and/or their local senior center, at least once a week to three times a week, if meals are delivered once a week. Volunteers will track calls and report weekly to their local senior center.

Ninety-one (91) Unduplicated RSVP Volunteers will serve in three (3) adult day centers, and one (1) hospice providing respite services to caregivers, at least once a week. Activities will include: escorting clients to social activities, encouraging participation and socialization, assisting the client with starting activities, and introducing the clients to others. Volunteers will also help with meals, transportation to medical appointments, and clerical duties. We will be tracking the number of Veterans/Active Military receiving services during the grant period.

We are using the matching H9 Priority (with H8) -- Number of individuals with disabilities having increased social support (Anticipated Outcome -- 175), and the matching H14 Priority (with H13) -- Number of caregivers who reported having increased social ties/perceived social support (Anticipated

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Outcome - 60). Meals-on-Wheels recipients/frail elderly/disabled who receive calls from the RSVP "Ring Team," and Caregivers will receive an annual survey at the end of the grant year. RSVP will produce the survey and the Senior Centers and Adult Day Centers will see that each participant receives said survey. Station personnel and/or RSVP volunteers will assist with the completion of the surveys. RSVP staff will collect the surveys before the end of the grant year for calculation prior to progress reporting. All surveys will ask, "Are you a Veteran/Active Military, or a family member of a Veteran/Active Military?" for tracking purposes.

The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) monitors six types of health-risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth and adults, including: Behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence, sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, alcohol and other drug use, tobacco use, unhealthy dietary behaviors, and inadequate physical activity (Texas Department of State Health Services).

All of the above require preventative health behavior. Through information about, and access to, free and/or affordable healthcare services, the Deep East Texas RSVP will be working with community partners to encourage individuals to engage in positive/healthy lifestyle changes/choices.

One (1) work plan addresses the issue of distributing information; Access to Care -- H2 -- Number of clients receiving information on health insurance, access, and benefits (Anticipated Output -- 100).

At least ten (10) Unduplicated RSVP Volunteers will be serving with at least five (5) volunteer stations comprised of: crisis centers, drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers, county drug court, and a senior adult, low to no-cost, prescription drug program. Volunteers will distribute various materials related to engaging in positive/healthy lifestyle choices/changes. Healthcare services that may be provided are: free pregnancy tests, free ultrasound, low to no-cost prescription drugs, and peer group support. These materials will be distributed one-on-one, and in group settings to youth and adults. Referrals will be given to appropriate healthcare services when necessary, and/or requested.

Each station will maintain an activity log of services and materials offered, and report the numbers to RSVP, at least twice a year. There is no outcome selected for this work plan.

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According to the US Census Bureau Report's, 2012 estimates, the percent of persons age 25+ who graduated from high school are 80.4% - Texas, and 84.6% - US. Deep East Texas graduates are less than the Texas average in eight (8) counties (72.9% - 79.7%), and all twelve (12) counties have fewer graduates than the US average (72.9% - 82.7%). The Texas Education Agency goes further to state that it is imperative that students are helped with learning problems early on in the education process to prevent discouragement and the probability of their dropping out prior to graduation. There are many students who need special attention that can't always be given by the classroom instructor/teacher.

Two (2) work plans address the issue of tutoring -- public schools and other; K-12 Success -- ED2 -- Number of students who completed K-12 education programs (Anticipated Output -- 100).

At least thirty-four (34) Unduplicated RSVP Volunteers will serve in public schools (K-12). Volunteers will: serve as monitors, assist teachers, read to and listen to students read, tutor students in reading, writing, mathematics and test-taking (one-on-one or in group sessions), depending on the students' ability level and topic needs. The students participating, and volunteer responsibilities will be selected by the teacher/instructor, being careful to match the right student(s) with the right volunteer(s).

At least two (2) Unduplicated RSVP Volunteers will serve in various after-school and summer tutoring programs, and a service-learning program. Volunteers will: serve as monitors, teach, read to and listen to students read, tutor students in reading, writing, mathematics and test-taking (one-on-one or in group sessions), depending on the students' ability level and topic needs. The students participating, and volunteer responsibilities will be selected by the teacher/instructor, being careful to match the right student(s) with the right volunteer(s).

We are using the matching ED27 Outcome -- Number of students in mentoring/tutoring programs with improved academic engagement (Anticipated Outcome -- 85).

The teacher will complete a survey, via phone, fax, or e-mail that will show each student's improved academic engagement. Due to the way the grant cycles, and the school year falls, the survey will cover a 6 to 7 month period of time. RSVP staff will instruct the appropriate teaching staff concerning

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the teacher survey pre-grant year. As we have done for the last three years, for privacy purposes, names of students will not be shared with RSVP, just the number of those starting and the number improving.

According to the US Department of Veteran Affairs, Office of Rural Health, "Rural veterans have higher rates of illnesses than those living in the urban areas, but they're far away from cities and hospitals, so they have limited access to quality health care." The Department of Veteran Affairs is "determined to bridge that distance." "After all, they've (Veterans have) gone the distance for us, now we're going the distance for them." (DVA) The Deep East Texas RSVP is going to help bridge the distance, as well.

Two (2) work plans address the issues of support veterans in rural communities and other community-based activity that serves VETs; Veterans and Military Families -- V1 -- Number of veterans receiving CNCS-supported assistance (Output -- 2,500).

A minimum of two (2) Unduplicated RSVP Volunteers will serve with the Charles Wilson VA Outpatient Clinic. They will ride the VA motor coach, with the Veteran patients to/from the VA Hospital in Houston. They will provide companionship, encouragement, and assistance on/off the VA motor coach, to the Veterans. RSVP Volunteers will also help at the VA Clinic, as needed, to provide support to the patients and the VA Outpatient Clinic staff. This VA Clinic services over 6,000 Veterans a year.

A minimum of eleven (11) Unduplicated RSVP Volunteers will serve at two (2) volunteer stations making pillows (1,500+) for Veterans to be used after outpatient and surgery appointments; to aid with home recovery, and to be used in wheelchairs. At least three (3) Unduplicated RSVP Volunteers will serve at two (2) volunteer stations writing notes of encouragement to active military and "Thank You" notes to Veterans for their service.

The number of Veterans receiving assistance will be gathered from The Charles Wilson VA Outpatient Clinic, via e-mail, fax, or phone. VA Pillow makers will report the total number of pillows made and distributed to Veterans. The RSVP Encouragers will track the number of cards/notes that are sent out to Veterans/Active Military. Numbers will be collected at the end of each grant year. There is no

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outcome selected for these work plans.

The residents in the 12 counties of Deep East Texas have either experienced the fall-out from tornadoes and storms caused by hurricanes in the last five years, and/or provided food, clothing, shelter, and other necessities to those in need. With the lack of rain over the past few years, and the vast acres of pine trees, fires are possible, as well. The Deep East Texas RSVP will have volunteers serving in disaster response, when and as needed.

One (1) work plan addresses the issue of responding; Disaster Services -- D6 -- Number of RSVP service hours in disaster assistance (Output -- 200).

At least three (3) Unduplicated RSVP Volunteers will serve at two (2) volunteer stations to assist with disaster response. Volunteer service hours in disaster assistance will be counted. Time sheets will be used to track each volunteer's hours. There is no outcome selected for this work plan.

Charitable giving that helps to sustain community non-profit organizations generally decreases during difficult economic times, of which we are now facing in Deep East Texas. Yet, services are still being requested, and supplies and equipment are still necessary in order to provide these essential services. This project matches RSVP Volunteers with area non-profits in order to assist with fundraising efforts. The short-term goal is to create stronger, more sustainable services within the community, with the long-term goal of expanding the "scale, reach, efficiency, or effectiveness of the programs and organizations." Volunteer efforts will not only aid the non-profits for which they volunteer, but other community non-profit organizations will benefit, as well. College/University scholarships and endowments will also be funded through the efforts of the Deep East Texas RSVP Volunteer.

One (1) work plan will address the issue of garnering donations; Capacity Building -- G3-3.16R -- Dollar value of cash resources leveraged by CNCS-supported organizations or participants (Output - \$250,000).

Three hundred and two (302) Unduplicated RSVP Volunteers will serve at seventeen (17) volunteer stations to garner donations. Volunteers will be involved with a variety of tasks, such as: planning/conducting for-profit trips, sales through gift/resale shops, event ticket sales, seating

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patrons, various fundraising events, jewelry sales, garage sales, quilt/craft sales, bizarres, and raffles. RSVP Volunteers may also assist with organizing, managing, marketing, sorting, stocking, and clerical and/or accounting duties related to the above tasks. This work plan also includes our MLK and 9/11 National Days of Service, where food items and monetary donations are collected for food pantries and volunteer fire departments (VFDs).

RSVP Volunteer Stations will report by e-mail, fax, or phone the total funds garnered by RSVP Volunteers/organizations, annually. There is no outcome selected for this work plan.

The Deep East Texas RSVP Volunteers have served in this region for over forty (40) years. With the region being comprised of twelve (12) counties; the community needs are just as vast, and the people just as diverse. It is imperative that the Volunteers serve in the areas that they consider to be priorities. The number of volunteers remaining, one hundred and seventy-three (173), permits all the remaining volunteers to remain as part of the Deep East Texas RSVP, while keeping the Community Priorities to 20% of the proposed project. This will leave room for others that may need to be added later.

One work plan addresses the issue of other; Other Community Priorities -- OT1: SC1 -- Grantee met their target for community priority activity (Yes/No).

One hundred and seventy-three (173) Unduplicated RSVP Volunteers will serve through thirty-seven (37) Volunteer stations, made up of: libraries, museums, historical commissions, senior centers, nursing homes, and committees/councils. Volunteers will: shelve and distribute books/materials, serve as docents, record genealogies and update cemetery records, serve meals and assist the handicapped, visit nursing home residents and provide entertainment, and serve on committees and councils to help area non-profits to meet their goals and objectives.

RSVP time sheets will be used to track hours of our community priority volunteers. There is no outcome for this work plan.

Recruitment and Development

The Deep East Texas RSVP has been working with area volunteers for over forty (40) years. With the onset of the new performance measure requirements, we have been working over the last year to

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tweak all of our station partnerships and volunteer assignments in preparing for re-competition. We have paid special attention in working with station partners to insure that assignments are necessary, rewarding, challenging, and keeping in-line with the new performance measures. Because we started last year, we have been able to re-align the entire program, without having to "graduate" volunteers or break partnerships with our long-term stations. We are blessed to have partners and volunteers that are flexible and willing to adapt to the changes within our program.

In January of 2013, the Deep East Texas RSVP re-wrote its RSVP Policies and Procedures, aligning them completely with the new performance measure requirements and the Senior Corps Handbook. We also re-wrote our RSVP Volunteer & Station Handbook. When monitored in March of 2013, both re-writings passed without any changes being required. One thousand Handbooks were printed in-house and distributed, by the RSVP Staff, to all of the RSVP Volunteer Stations, for their use, and to be distributed to the volunteers linked to each Station. Since our program is so wide-spread, geographically, the RSVP Staff explained the new handbook to Station Staff, in its entirety, so that Station Staff could convey the message to their current RSVP Volunteers. Each volunteer received a handbook, as well.

Recruitment methods utilized by the project include: newspaper articles; television and radio coverage of volunteer/program activities; presentations to senior citizen clubs, organizations, retiree groups, RSVP Travelers, and any other pertinent individual or group; with special emphasis being placed on untapped people groups (ethnicity, education level, Veterans, disabled, etc). At present, approximately ten percent (10% - 85 persons) of our Volunteers are Veterans, and approximately twenty-two percent (22% - 187 persons) have some type of disability. We are currently in line with our area ethnicity statistics (80% White vs. 75% and 14% Black vs. 14%), but fall a little short in the Hispanic and American Indian count (5.5 % H vs. 9% and .5% AI vs. 2%). We will be working more closely with these two people groups to have a better ethnic representation.

The Deep East Texas RSVP recruits new volunteers from health fairs and the annual Senior Mayfest which brings over five hundred (500) seniors from diverse backgrounds, both ethnically and educationally. Also, it has been proven that one of the best recruitment techniques is for a current volunteer to share stories of his/her volunteer experiences with friends, which encourages them to become involved in volunteerism through RSVP. We recruit many Volunteers this way; by word-of-

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mouth.

Potential Volunteers fill out an application that asks for their employment experience, volunteer experience, skills, and desired volunteer assignment(s). All of the applicant information is put in to the RSVP database, Volunteer Reporter, which can sort Volunteers by skill for ease of assignment. Volunteers are interviewed, in person, in order to determine the proper placement(s). RSVP Staff orientates the Volunteer to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), Senior Corps, the Deep East Texas Council of Governments (DETCOG -- Sponsor), and RSVP using the Deep East Texas RSVP Volunteer & Station Handbook. It is at this time that Volunteers learn of their benefits: supplemental liability insurance, possible mileage reimbursement, and Volunteer recognition. They are also made aware of each entity's (RSVP, Station, and Volunteer) responsibilities and expectations.

Most volunteers have an idea of what they do and don't want to do, but for some, they are undecided. In that case, we offer two or three possible Station assignments and give them the opportunity to go and "check them out." Volunteer Stations are contacted by a faxed volunteer introduction, and a personal phone call, making them aware of the volunteer's interest in their organization. Whenever possible, an RSVP Staff member will meet the Volunteer at the Station, for a proper introduction. The RSVP Staff does follow-up within two weeks to see what the Volunteer has decided, and to check with the Station to see if the Volunteer will be of benefit to their organization.

When the Volunteer makes his/her decision, they are given a job description for their new Volunteer assignment(s), from the Station supervisor/trainer. Though Federal regulations state that job descriptions need only be on file at the Volunteer Station, we are finding that some stations do not give written descriptions, but oral. We have recently mailed out a 915 person survey asking if the Volunteer received a written/oral/both/or none - assignment description, so that we can track where we have holes. We will be working with the stations during this grant period to be sure that all RSVP Volunteers are given a written assignment description, and that all assignment descriptions are on file in the RSVP office.

Volunteers are trained by Station Staff prior to beginning his/her assignment. Most times, on-the-job training is provided, as well. RSVP Staff works closely with the Station Staff to explore opportunities

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for volunteers to fill leadership roles. Stations are encouraged to include volunteers in any staff training associated with their assignments, when it is deemed appropriate and feasible. RSVP Volunteers are managed by Station Staff and checked on by RSVP Staff during their monthly (or more frequent) visits to each Volunteer Station. Much attention is paid to what the Volunteer is doing and if the assignment continues to line up with the Primary Focus Area, Other Focus Areas, or Capacity Building; depending on the type of station/job assigned. Volunteers are re-assigned when necessary.

We maintain contact with current volunteers through Station visits, cards, newsletters, e-mails, phone calls, recognitions, and surveys. People volunteer because they see a need and want to help fill it. We want them to know that they are indeed needed, and we take every opportunity to tell them so!

Volunteers are provided with an annual recognition event(s) to honor them for their service and make the general public aware of the contribution they make to the community. The recognition will either be conducted in the community/county where the volunteer serves, or at one location for all volunteers, and will involve the station representatives and public officials. RSVP Advisory Council members will also be recognized for their service and support of the program. Recognitions may include: entertainment, food, gifts, door prizes, or any other item that might be donated by the stations and/or communities in which they serve.

Program Management

RSVP Volunteers, age fifty-five (55) plus, are recruited and enrolled by the RSVP project and placed with or through Volunteer Stations. Volunteer birthdates are written on the Volunteer application and checked by the RSVP Staff for eligibility. We do recruit Junior Volunteers (age 50-54), but their numbers and hours are only counted for local/community purposes. This gives us an opportunity to orientate persons in to RSVP, well in advance of eligibility, which increases our partnership base. Volunteer Stations are encouraged to support recruitment by referring prospective RSVP Volunteers to RSVP Staff. RSVP Staff visit Stations, regularly, to enhance the quality of volunteer service to the satisfaction of both the Senior Volunteer and the Volunteer Station, and to make certain that RSVP Volunteers are performing their assigned service activities.

A Volunteer Station is a public agency, secular or faith-based private non-profit organization, or proprietary health care organization that accepts the responsibility for assignment, training, and

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supervision of RSVP Volunteers. Informal groups do not qualify as Volunteer Stations. In-home assignments are made only through a Volunteer Station. At the present time, all qualifying information is on file in the RSVP office ensuring compliance with the Federal regulation that the Volunteer Station is eligible to be a part of the Deep East Texas RSVP. All Stations have also completed and signed an Accessibility and Safety Checklist, and those are on file in the RSVP office, as well.

The Deep East Texas RSVP has found that education, communication, and contact are the best ways to ensure Station compliance with RSVP regulations. Each Volunteer Station is required to maintain a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Volunteer Station and the local RSVP office. The MOU is signed by the RSVP Sponsor and the Volunteer Station, which identifies project requirements, prohibited activities, working relationships, and mutual responsibilities. The MOU is re-signed every three years, and updated as needed. All of the one hundred and five (105) Volunteer Stations mentioned in this proposal have a current and signed MOU.

We expect Volunteer Stations to adhere to the MOU, having signed that they will do so. RSVP Staff visit each Station, at least monthly, to ensure that the Volunteer Station is complying with RSVP regulations. If a Station is found to be out of compliance, the RSVP Director will be notified immediately, and if the situation cannot be rectified, the Deep East Texas RSVP will sever relationship with the Volunteer Station on the basis of failure to comply with RSVP regulations. We will make every effort to rectify the situation.

If a Volunteer is found not to be performing his/her assigned service activity, RSVP will first ask why and then will work with the Station to correct the situation. If the Volunteer and/or Station want the Volunteer to remain in the non-priority service activity, then RSVP will make every effort to re-assign the volunteer to a Community Priority position. If RSVP is at its 30% capacity, and the Volunteer does not want to relocate to another Station, then RSVP will "graduate" the Volunteer. RSVP will make every effort to keep the Volunteer with RSVP.

The Deep East Texas RSVP has been able to re-align itself with the new performance measure requirements; keeping our Community Priority Volunteers to 20% of the 30% ceiling, which gives us room to move. But, if along the way we have a need to "graduate" volunteers in to the community,

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we are prepared to do so. We will proceed with professionalism, tact, and kindness so that we don't burn bridges, and we keep our partnerships in tack for future assistance.

Our Primary Focus Area is Healthy Futures. We selected this focus area because of the track record that already exists. Our Station partners rely on RSVP as much as we rely on our Stations. The food pantries, adult day centers, and Meals-on-Wheels participants have been surveyed by RSVP for the last three years, which has guided us in making many of our decisions for this grant application. We feel very secure that the three hundred and twenty (320) Volunteers and the twenty-nine (29) Volunteer Stations linked to the Primary Focus Area will generate some great outcomes by the end of the project, and make a definite impact within our twelve (12) county region.

Our most valuable partner is our RSVP Advisory Council; they keep us on track and in compliance. Our Council is very active doing the following: assists in assessing community needs; assists in fund raising and resource development; assists with the National Days of Service (MLK & 9/11); supports the development of a service ethic in the community; advises on volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition strategies; suggest candidates for Advisory Council and RSVP Staff positions; links the project with other community service resources, including faith-based organizations; advises on programming for impact and performance measurement; assesses project accomplishments and impact, including progress toward meeting performance measures; assesses satisfaction of volunteers and volunteer stations; suggests ways the project can gain increased visibility and recognition in the community; advises on how trends in the community are affecting seniors, and completes a Community Partner Survey each year to evaluate the impact of the Deep East Texas RSVP.

The RSVP Regional Advisory Council is made up of two representatives from each county, and one At-large member elected by the Council and approved by the DETCOG Board. One fourth of the membership must be persons aged 55 or over. The RSVP Director and the Sponsor Chief Executive, or an appointee of the Sponsor Executive, shall be non-voting ex-officio members of the Council. There shall be one member of the Sponsor's governing board who will be a voting member of the Council, but who like the RSVP Director and the Sponsor Chief Executive, cannot serve as an officer.

The RSVP Regional Advisory Council meetings shall function according to established by-laws. The Council shall have regularly scheduled meetings once a quarter. Transportation costs for attendance

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at Council meetings shall be reimbursed in the same manner as for transportation of the RSVP Volunteers. Council meetings will be held on the 5th Tuesday of each quarter. Announcements of the meeting, including an agenda and minutes of the previous meeting will be mailed to Council members, RSVP Staff, and the DETCOG Executive Director seven (7) days prior to the meeting date. A sign-in sheet will provide documentation of attendance.

Organizational Capability

The Deep East Texas Council of Governments (DETCOG) has sponsored the RSVP since its inception in 1973. DETCOG is a voluntary association of local governments organized by authority of State Article 1011, Vernon's Annotated Civil Statutes, as amended. DETCOG functions as a multipurpose organization combining the advantages of an economic development district and council of governments. Membership in the Deep East Texas Council of Governments is open to all counties, cities, school districts, and political divisions of the State located in the Deep East Texas Planning Region Number 14. The general purpose of DETCOG is to strengthen existing local governments within the region and to encourage and offer an organizational vehicle by which they may join and cooperate with one another and with the representatives of major economic interests, citizens groups, minority groups, and groups experiencing economic distress to improve the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of the Deep East Texas Region. These partnerships are a great asset to RSVP, in that a diverse group of people and entities assist us in meeting and maintaining our goals.

DETCOG not only manages RSVP, but Texas Information and Referral Network/2-1-1, Emergency Number System/9-1-1, Area Agency on Aging, Criminal Justice Department, Deep East Texas Regional Housing Authority, Disaster Recovery, Emergency Management/Homeland Security, and Service to At Risk Youth (STAR); managing in excess of \$22 million in revenues in 2012.

The DETCOG Administrative (Human Resources and Finance) Staff manages grants awarded to RSVP in accordance with RSVP program regulations, 45 CFR 2553, and the Notice of Grant Award (NGA).

When there is a question concerning policy and procedures, DETCOG and the RSVP Director are required to follow the Federal Regulations, published in Title 45, Chapter XXV, Part 2553, of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), which are included as Appendix 2.

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The executive director is the chief administrative officer of DETCOG and is responsible for the formulation of personnel procedures and the administration of personnel policies and procedures. The executive director may delegate authority to appropriate staff members to act in his or her behalf in the administration of these policies and procedures.

The policies set forth the primary rules governing employment with DETCOG. The policies inform employees of the benefits and obligations of employment with DETCOG. They have been prepared and adopted in order to promote consistent, equitable, and effective practices by both employees and supervisors which will result in high quality public service to the citizens of Deep East Texas.

The Finance Department's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) provide a planned, uniform and consistent set of procedures to facilitate the legal administration of the financial aspects of the programs funded through State, Local and Federal agencies. DETCOG will comply with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles to record the financial activities of all programs. The SOP's are designed to promote efficient and effective management and to safeguard the assets of DETCOG.

The accounting procedures, when implemented, will comprise an accounting system with built-in checks and balances to meet the reporting requirements of Regional Councils and fund source requirements of various Federal and State Grantors. The checks and balances provide assurance that accurate and complete records are made of all transactions and allow control to be maintained at the reporting level.

DETCOG will: be held accountable for all revenues and expenditures through its' financial systems, policies and procedures to the citizens of the Deep East Texas region, funding agencies and its' members; maximize the resources available and minimize risk in its efforts to serve its' constituency; safeguard the assets and preserve retained fund balances to ensure its on-going operations in the twelve county region; strive to eliminate any disallowed or questioned costs and receive a clean and unqualified opinion in its annual independent audit report; and prepare a comprehensive annual budget to provide a basis for planning, control and evaluation of its fiscal and programmatic activities.

The Finance department will provide an accounting system to: Ensure the recordkeeping system utilized provides for the separate identification of receipts, disbursements, assets, liabilities and fund

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balances. Provide for the summarization of financial information in a manner which will facilitate the preparation of monthly reports required by the funding agencies, auditors and internal users. Present fairly and with full disclosure, the financial position and results of financial operations of the funds and account groups of DETCOG. Determine and demonstrate compliance with finance-related legal, regulatory and contractual provisions. Comply with the Fiscal Control Policy as adopted by the DETCOG Board of Directors.

Deep East Texas Council of Governments replaced the AS400 Accounting System July 1, 1999, with the Sage MIP Fund Accounting System, currently called Sage 100 Fund Accounting. At that time, DETCOG adopted a seven segment accounting code. In 2010, the Finance department implemented an eighth segment for additional tracking of one program. The account code structure is designed to provide a means for responsible reporting on a project basis. This accounting system is used for planning and managing budgets, maximizing grants, and producing accurate and customized reports.

DETCOG's Fiscal Control Policy requires the Finance department to make quarterly reports as to the funds status of all programs. These summary reports will indicate the total expenditures to date, total approved budget, budget variances and the grant cash position. The annual report is required to disclose compliance with collateral requirements on all bank and investment balances in excess of federally insured limits.

The computer system generates a monthly budget variance report to compare year-to-date expenses against the annual budget for each grant. The differences are reflected under a variance column. On a quarterly basis, the Finance Department will generate a written synopsis of each program's status to highlight any areas of concern or insufficient activity. The Program Directors can utilize these reports to make corrective actions or to locate any errors in classification and/or allocation of expenses. These reports will also list the current month's expenses. This can also be another source for pinpointing areas of exception.

The computer system generates monthly detailed transaction report as a support and back up to the summary of the current month totals listed in the budget variance report. The Program Directors can investigate any entries they may question by looking to the line items in the detail report. This report lists the document number, vendor, and date of the transactions and the dollar amount as a debit or

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credit for each expense account in each grant.

A monthly funds status report will be created to enhance Program Directors' ability to quickly assess any funding or expenditure concerns. The report groups all grants together for each program. The total match required, grant funds awarded and funds received versus funds expended highlights the net cash position. The second part of the report is a summary budget variance. This report will be generated in Excel by the 10th of each month.

Each Program Director will receive a section of the report while the Executive Director and the Finance Department receive the entire report. Finance will use the report to highlight the need to request funds on reimbursement only grants and to locate areas of excessive cash on hand for grants that permit advance funds. This report is not linked to the budgets in the system and must be maintained separately. All entries will be generated by the month-end trial balance data.

DETCOG will remain committed to a policy of internal controls in order to monitor compliance with policies and procedures established by law or statute, funding agencies and DETCOG management. Internal control will be divided into two areas: administrative controls and accounting or fiscal control. Administrative control will be divided into the areas of compliance with requirements set forth by the funding agency, performance standards and customer satisfaction. Accounting controls will be designed to achieve the basic objectives of validation, accuracy, completeness, maintenance and physical security. These objectives will be achieved by self-monitoring, separation of duties, external and internal audits and by strict adherence to established policies and procedures.

It will be the policy of Deep East Texas Council of Governments, in order to assure that contractual agreements are met, to provide internal monitoring of programs which DETCOG administers and to monitor all entities with which DETCOG subcontracts to provide services for programs which DETCOG administers.

The purpose of the monitoring policy will be to safeguard funds and other assets for which DETCOG is responsible, to assure contractual compliance, to assure compliance with EO requirements, to facilitate identification of fiscal or programmatic compliance problems and to timely address such problems through technical assistance or sanctions. Monitoring, by design, is not an audit nor is it

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intended to uncover fraud as its sole purpose. Monitoring is limited in its scope to a sample of data to determine compliance within a limited time period.

The DETCOG Fiscal Department uses a modified accrual method system of accounting in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards and provides financial management for RSVP. Policies and Procedures (SOP) were just updated on June 26, 2013 and are in place for monitoring, purchase control, payroll, and travel (both Staff and Volunteer). DETCOG is subject to an A-133 Audit.

Reporting and record keeping are essential functions of project management to ensure proper stewardship of public funds and provide information needed to report to the Congress and Executive Branch of the Federal Government on expenditures, project progress, and accomplishments. Reports include:

FFR - Federal Financial Report (FFR) is submitted in eGrants on a semi-annual basis, as specified in the NGA (within 30 days of the end of each reporting period). The FFR (Form SF 425) reports the following transactions: previous period, current period, and total outlays; funds expended for volunteer support and Federal versus non-Federal expenses; unliquidated obligations; and several types of volunteer data. This report is completed by the Finance Department, with copies available to the RSVP Director.

Project Progress Reports (PPR) -- The Project Progress report is prepared by the RSVP Director and submitted in eGrants twice a year. Copies are made available to the Executive Director before submission, and to the RSVP Advisory Council at the next scheduled quarterly meeting.

Project Profile and Volunteer Activity (PPVA) -- The PPVA, is prepared by the RSVP Director and submitted in eGrants once a year (November 16th, reporting for the period of July 1st -- June 30th). The supplement serves as a National data collection instrument. The submissions are aggregated to present national and regional snapshots of project activities, clients served, sponsor and volunteer station profiles, volunteer demographics and trends, and other aspects of project operations.

The In-kind contributions made to the project will be documented when they are received. The form used to collect this in-kind data will include: information about the goods and services donated, the value of the donation, when the donation was made, and the signature of the donor and the person receiving the donation. This information will be forwarded to the DETCOG Fiscal department for

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entry into the RSVP financial records. Financial resources may be received by DETCOG or the RSVP Director. When received, the donation is booked and passed on to the fiscal department for continued accounting purposes. The Deep East Texas RSVP usually receives in excess of \$40,000 in in-kind each year.

The RSVP Advisory Council will assist the project in developing, organizing, and conducting fundraising activities to provide necessary matching funds for the program. The Council usually generates around \$8,000 in matching contributions each year. They are re-implementing the request for donations from cities and counties within the DETCOG region. The cities and counties will be made aware of the impact that volunteers are making in their communities, and asked to make an annual contribution to support those volunteer efforts. Whenever possible in-kind contributions will be considered and used before cash contributions and/or grant monies, unless otherwise mandated by State/Federal law.

The Deep East Texas RSVP Policies and Procedures were completely re-written in January of 2013, and passed monitoring by CNCS in March of 2013, without correction or addition.

"Records may be kept in electronic or hard copy form." (See page 101, section 49, of the RSVP Operations Handbook). The DETCOG RSVP maintains all Volunteer, Station, and time sheet information/data in the Volunteer Reporter database software.

RSVP maintains a file on each Volunteer Station containing: A current, signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); Letters of Agreement, where there are in-home assignments through the volunteer station; an Accessibility and Safety form, signed by the Station Representative; a listing by name of the RSVP Volunteers placed at the volunteer Station; when made available, an assignment description from the Volunteer Station -- RSVP will input assignment descriptions in the Volunteer database, as part of the Station information. Since the assignment description originates from the Volunteer Station, the Station will maintain assignment descriptions for the RSVP Volunteer; and Station brochures and/or additional information about the organization, when given.

RSVP maintains records for each Volunteer containing: A signed enrollment form, including name, address, phone number, and date of birth; a Designation of Beneficiary for insurance purposes, when

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they have one (some don't); the name of the Volunteer Station (s) where the RSVP Volunteer is placed; a copy of the written assignment description for each Volunteer or a notation that the volunteer's assignment description is maintained at the volunteer station. Assignment descriptions will be maintained on the Volunteer database, and may not be in hard copy form; on the enrollment form, a designation for "Veteran, yes or no;" and if the Volunteer is requesting mileage reimbursement, then a copy of evidence of insurance.

RSVP Volunteer records will be kept in alphabetical order by county. All pertinent Volunteer information will be attached to the Volunteer application. Volunteer records will only be put in file folders when transported for monitoring purposes. RSVP records will be kept in secured files (cabinets) and/or office.

Personal information about volunteers contained on the enrollment form, such as address, will be disclosed only with expressed prior written or oral permission (if volunteer gives identifying information) of the Volunteer. Records may be subject to State or local ordinance governing access to records.

Data will be collected every month, and recorded within 30 days of the reporting deadline (10th of each month). Every effort will be made to meet this deadline, forgoing issues with staffing, available funds for mileage, and/or Volunteer database or server issues. Records will be accurate and available for CNCS reports before each given deadline.

Records are to be kept for a period of three (3) years. The DETCOG RSVP maintains records for seven (7) years, and Original MOUs and Volunteer applications, indefinitely. All original financial and employee data is stored in the Main DETCOG office in Jasper. Copies are kept in the RSVP Director's office for reference.

The present RSVP Staff will continue to work with the Deep East Texas RSVP in the new grant proposal. There are eight (8) staff members comprised of: one full-time (40+ hour) Program Director, one full-time Area Coordinator (Polk, San Jacinto, Trinity, and Tyler County - 32 hours @ week); one full-time Area Coordinator (Angelina and Nacogdoches County -- two largest counties - 32-38 hours @ week); one part-time Coordinator (Sabine, San Augustine, and Shelby County -- 16

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hours a week); one Coordinator (Houston County -- 8 hours @ week); one Coordinator (Jasper and Newton County -- 8 hours @ week), one Coordinator (Nacogdoches County Assistant, Timpson, and as needed -- 8 hours @ week), and one Data Entry Clerk/Administrative Assistant (up to 10 hours a week). This is the equivalent of approximately four (4) full-time employees.

The program Director was in this same position from 1988 to 1992, and has been serving as Director this time for four years. Holding a Bachelors Degree in General Business, with a minor in Criminal Justice, the Director brings in excess of 25 years of marketing, public relations, volunteer recruitment, and business administration experience to the program. There is a great working relationship between RSVP and our program sponsor (DETCOG), whose Executive Director, when appointed over 23 years ago, was the youngest, and first Black COG director in the state of Texas.

In understanding the vastness of Deep East Texas, as described in the Strengthening Communities section of the grant application, we have found over the years that hiring staff members from around the region to serve in their own "neighborhood" is: a shorter distance in travel whereby more cost effective, saves valuable time on the road and more time with the Volunteers and Stations, builds better partnerships because the staff member lives where they work, and gives the staff a better knowledge of the area in which they are working when trying to meet critical community needs.

The Deep East Texas RSVP leaves you with this: "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little." Franklin D. Roosevelt

Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A