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Executive Summary

The County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency (CHCSA) sponsors The Rio Grande Valley Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). The CHCSA's mission is to support efforts in identifying and ameliorating the cause of poverty and to help solve problems which block the achievement of economic self-sufficiency.

The objectives of the CHCSA are to: (1) assure the availability of a mechanism where by we provide a range of services and activities having a measurable and potentially major impact on the causes of poverty; (2) increase the participation of the poor in the activities of their community so they can assist in working their own problems; (3) providing energy conservation and budgeting measures to direct the working poor toward energy-sufficiency through in-depth case management; (4) coordinate and establish linkages with governmental and other social service program to assure effectively delivery of services; and (5) encourage the private sector entities to participate in efforts to ameliorate poverty in the community.

The Rio Grande Valley Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, locally sponsored by the CHCSA and was initiated in April 1, 1983, serving Hidalgo County only. The program now serves Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy Counties. The program has been in existence for the past 30 years.

Senior volunteers aged 55 and over are linked with community needs throughout the three counties served. At the end of the 36 month grant period, an estimated 801 unduplicated RSVP volunteers will serve elderly, homebound, disabled, veterans, low-income and children through their efforts at 37 volunteer stations in the three county areas. The primary focus area for County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency - RSVP will be Healthy Futures. An estimated of 250 unduplicated RSVP volunteers will serve older adults, veterans, and low income families through sites providing food distribution. RSVP volunteers will also assist in unloading and sorting food through food distribution, food collection and food pantry support at ten food pantries which will provide food for needy families and their children.

At the end of the three year performance period approximately 2,167 individuals will report increased food security for themselves and their children as a result of the services provided by the volunteers. They will also report having increased social ties or perceived social support.

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In addition, to our primary focus area we have food delivery another focus area in healthy futures which will be carried out by approximately 157 RSVP volunteers at 4 volunteer stations who have a commitment of helping ensure healthy futures for low income elderly, disabled and veterans who are in need. This service also provides social contact with those who provide deliveries and helps them remain independent to avoid premature institutionalization. By the end of the period at least 242 unduplicated individuals will be receiving independent services and also will report increased social support.

The above outcomes will be achieved through the efforts of the unduplicated RSVP volunteers.

The CNCS federal investment of 76,751 will be supplemented by an est. \$123,000 of non-federal grantee resources.

Strengthening Communities

The Lower Rio Grande Valley is located in the southernmost tip of Texas and is comprised of Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy counties. Each county is unique geographically and demographically and lies along the northern banks of the Rio Grande River which separates Mexico from the United States. Over the last decades, the emergence of maquiladoras (factory or fabric plants) has caused a surge of industrial development along the border while International Bridges have allowed Mexican Nationals to shop, sell and do business in the border cities along the river.

Cameron County covers 1,276 squares miles and according to the U.S. Census estimates for 2010 show Cameron County with a population of 406,220. The largest city in the Rio Grande Valley, Brownsville, is the county seat.

Willacy County is north of Cameron and is 784 square miles wide. The smallest of the three counties in area and population, 22,134 residents, Willacy county is predominately rural with small towns and cities scattered in between agricultural, mining and ranching operations.

Hidalgo County is the largest of the three counties, as it comprises the western half of the region at just over 1,583 square miles. The majority of the manufacturing and business operations in the Rio Grande Valley are located in the southern half of this county. The southern area also holds twenty-one of the county's municipalities. The northern end is rural and primarily used for agriculture. Hidalgo has a population of 774,769 according to the 2010 Census.

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According to the U.S. Census Bureau for Census 2010, the population for the Rio Grande Valley is 1,203,123 with the following notable statistics:

1. 1,203,123 Total Population

Hidalgo County: 774,769

Cameron County: 406,220

Willacy County: 22,134

2. Hispanics: 1,081,771

Hidalgo County: 91,705,040

Cameron County: 88% 357,474

Willacy County: 87% 19,257

3. Living under the poverty level: 410,103

Hidalgo County: 33% 255,674

Cameron County: 36% 146,239

Willacy County: 37% 8,190

4. Persons 65+ 129,118

Hidalgo County: 10% 77,477

Cameron County: 12% 48,764

Willacy County: 13% 2,877

5. Older Persons living in poverty: 34,203

Hidalgo County: 27% 20,919

Cameron County: 25% 12,191

Willacy County: 38% 1,093

Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy Counties have been served by the County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency RSVP for the past 30 years. Due to economic conditions, non-profit and social service organizations in the rural area served have tight budgets and need RSVP volunteers to fulfill their

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missions to provide help for those in need.

One major issue is hunger in families in our communities. Our primary focus area is Healthy Futures which is on Food Pantry Support. According to the 2010 Census 410,103 individuals live under the poverty level. An average of 30,000 families in Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy Counties rely on The Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley and its food pantries to supplement their dietary needs on a monthly basis. Among members of the America's Second Harvest Network, Hunger in America 2010, 74% of pantries, 65 of kitchen, and 54% of shelter programs reported that there had been an increase since 2009 in the number of clients who came to their emergency food sites. Food providers voiced the concern that the high cost-of-living forces some tough choices on their clients-between food and rent, food and utilities, food and medical bills as a result of limited resources. In this situation, the food that pantries offer helps families avoid cutting food in order to make room for other expenses. SOURCE: Hunger in America, 2010 America's Second Harvest.

RSVP volunteers will assist approximately 2,167 individuals in receiving emergency food from food banks/other organizations.

On our primary focus area we have another important issue in Healthy Futures which is food delivery.

As per the 2010 census 34,203 individuals over the age of 65 live below the poverty levels in Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy Counties. This condition creates a great need among older persons for adequate nutrition.

Many seniors find themselves lacking nutritious meals because they often do not have family members to assist them or the means to support themselves. They have special dietary needs to combat a multitude of diseases, but tend to find themselves in situations that pose challenges for maintaining a healthy diet. Many have physical limitations that prevent them from getting out to the store on a regular basis to buy fresh food or have income limitations that restrict their ability to afford these highly nutritious food items.

Meals on Wheels, a service at most congregate meal sites, provides nutritious meals to individuals living alone, who have little incentive to prepare daily healthy meals. This service also provides social contact by those who provide deliveries and helps them remain independent to avoid premature institutionalization. SOURCE; Nutrition and Healthful Aging: National Service Directory.

At the end of the period approximately 242 unduplicated individuals will be receiving independent living services and reporting increased social support.

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These statistics demonstrate the overwhelming need for assistance for low income, elderly, veterans and disabled residents in the three counties served. Assistance for Healthy Futures includes food security, for low income individuals, disabled and homebound seniors including veterans. Also home delivered meals for disabled and homebound seniors including veterans, assuring that these individuals receive at least one hot, nutritious meal daily and social support enables them to live in their own home for a longer period of time.

RSVP will; recruit, place and retain volunteers to continue present and expand future services to meet Healthy Futures goals.

RSVP volunteers will be placed at volunteer stations that fit their interests and time requirements. RSVP Staff interviews volunteers and provide them with training of the RSVP rules and requirements and also on monthly time sheets, mileage claim forms, insurance and recognition. Through the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the stations and RSVP, stations also provide training and oversight. Volunteer hours are submitted on a monthly basis to Volunteer Coordinators. Any problems are reported to the RSVP Director.

Volunteer Stations addressing food security needs for elderly, veterans and disabled residents are food pantries and Meals on Wheels. Visitation to elderly homebound residents brings hope and security to these lonely residents.

With the assistance provided by RSVP volunteers in Healthy Futures Focus Area projects will lead to the National Performance Measure outputs and outcomes. As outputs, the number of individuals receiving food from ten food pantries will be provided by surveys from the volunteer stations. As outcomes the number of individuals that reported increased food security of themselves and their children.

The number of homebound elderly and disabled along with veterans who are able to live independently through receiving home delivered meals will be tracked through surveys and via telephone provided by Volunteer Station Supervisors on an annually basis. Also, the number of homebound elderly and disabled along with veterans who report having increased social ties and/or perceived social support will be reported as outcomes.

Recruitment and Development

Generosity thrives in the Rio Grande Valley. This is the reason for volunteerism. It is the desire to

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help those in your community and leave your legacy. Those wishing to give back to these communities do so without any compensation in mind. The RSVP does not offer monetary restitution but we provide all of our volunteers an experience that cannot be measure in numbers which is a good sense of worthiness and fulfillment.

Volunteer station supervisors monitor volunteers placed at their location. These station supervisors are selected for their dedication and commitment to address the need of their community and are capable individuals. While the RSVP Station Supervisor cannot do all the paperwork and oversee each detail at the volunteer stations. We assure them that our members placed under their care are not restricted to the tasks originally assigned. Based on the supervisors' confidence in the volunteer, they are asked to basically supervise the procedures at the volunteer station. The volunteers with the most experience that have shown the most dedication are given the most responsibility. In the RSVP Station Supervisor's absence we encourage that the supervision of the volunteer fall on the member with seniority who is recognized as a volunteer leader. Volunteer Leaders in the community help us recruit and also refer volunteers to other non-profit organizations. They also have students from the University of Texas and South Texas College volunteering at their stations during the summer or holidays.

Sometimes a volunteer requests a challenge or change of pace and we maximize efforts to find the best opportunity that satisfies his/her desire. We typically try to place volunteers according to their skills and experience. The RSVP Project Director and Area Coordinators advise of programs that offer a new opportunity to the prospective member during our recruitment phases.

Building a larger corps of volunteers is tied to a more personal recruitment process. As previously mentioned we strive to recruit volunteers of diverse backgrounds and we visit different churches, RV Parks, retirement homes, social clubs like Rotary Clubs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Su Casa De Esperanza and different associations such as the Retired Teachers' Association in the tri-county area. These visits/presentations give prospective volunteers the chance to have questions answered rather than disregard the program due to misconceptions. Volunteer Match has also been another tool to recruit volunteers 55+ and or refer them to other non-profit organizations.

Also recruiting volunteers is best achieved through current RSVP volunteers. "Because they asked" is

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another good reason someone signs up to volunteer. Also the RSVP Advisory Council and RSVP staff promote RSVP and personally recruit volunteers. It is a joint effort.

Recognition events are a very important aspect of the RSVP. In order to maintain a large number of volunteers we have increased recognition efforts. our Annual Banquet is thoroughly enjoyed by all RSVP members and guests attending. We have fabulous door prizes such as television sets and in some instances, cash. We recognize them with goody bags which include sometimes caps, windbreakers, tote bags, or lunch bags, umbrellas and folding arm chairs. For the first time in 2009 we had two banquets, one in Hidalgo County and another one in Harlingen for Volunteers from Cameron and Willacy counties. Everyone had a great time and our volunteers were provided with a barbecue apron with the RSVP Logo. RSVP volunteers are also recognized during National Volunteer Week and May Senior Citizens Month. Recognizing the senior volunteers is an important part of retention.

RSVP staff along with RSVP volunteers also participate with a Special Project during Senior Corps Week by reading stories to children who are patients at the Edinburg Children's Hospital.

In addition to these activities, we honor volunteers by name and in some cases photos are publicize in local newspapers as well as in our newsletter which is printed semi-annually and dedicate space that is devoted to the recognition of their outstanding jobs to impact our communities. RSVP Director sends public service announcements of volunteer opportunities to the three county area newspapers: The Monitor, Valley Morning Star and The Brownsville Herald. RSVP Director promotes the RSVP Program on Channel 5 and also makes RSVP presentations with Radio Esperanza. All of the above are utilized to target the Hispanic population and veterans. Also utilized are booths at health fairs and RSVP program presentations are made throughout the year to various organizations. RSVP also offers enrollment and literature information in Spanish for the Hispanic population.

The experience we offer our volunteers is unique and fulfilling. Our volunteer stations have RSVP volunteers working directly with the community and thus have a clear understanding of the impact they have on the lives of others. RSVP volunteers placed at the different elementary schools help children improve their reading abilities, catch up with their studies and encourage them to continue their education. The workers at the food pantries distribute food fundamental to the health of many needy families in the area. At congregate meal sites RSVP Volunteers serve the meals to center

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participants, pack the meals to homebound elderly, distribute disaster and healthy living information. They also carry out telephone reassurance when a participant does not attend the center. Each day is a reminder of the true meaning of community service. Not only do the volunteers enhance the quality of others lives, they also improve their own lives by living an active life. The active lifestyle also helps them deter nursing home placement and to live independently. A sense of autonomy is created when one is active and social.

The training of project staff, volunteers, volunteer station supervisors and community participation groups is handled in accordance with what we ask of the station. Initially we provide a presentation on how to fill out time sheets, mileage claim forms and explain the importance of the Memorandum of Understanding. In order to complement this presentation we give the volunteer station supervisors the opportunity to schedule additional training sessions upon request. They are also provided with RSVP Volunteer Handbooks which explains the insurance, the recognition and the importance of maintaining their hours to show the impact they make in the community. We are maximizing efforts to find and train more volunteers who can help in the following focus areas: Education, Healthy Futures, Veterans and Military Families, Environmental Stewardship, Economic Opportunity and Disaster Services. These volunteers should have the ability to effectively engage and leverage volunteer skills. Our contact information is provided after training in case they ever need technical assistance and let them know that we are available to answer questions or assist with any problem that may arise. RSVP Staff also attends training conferences conducted and/or authorized by the Corporation for National and Community Services.

Program Management

The County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency our sponsor agency provides oversight of the RSVP program. The County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency has many years of experience administering state and federal grants and has a proven track record in all these areas.

The RSVP director has 15 years of experience administering the program, and attends all available training opportunities. RSVP director has been with the RSVP program for 19 years. To achieve effective program management adherence to program regulations and the RSVP Operations Handbook is very important and necessary. It is a joint goal of the sponsor and the project director in meeting community needs while providing meaningful placements for the volunteers. Two RSVP Area Coordinators with a combination of 13 years of direct experience with the RSVP Program. They

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work closely with the volunteers and use the Volunteer Reporter to maintain all volunteer statistics. This is a valuable tool in all areas of recording, tracking, and reporting. Volunteer stations are developed and managed through contact with the RSVP director and volunteer area coordinators. The Memorandum of Understanding is explained to volunteer station supervisors regarding the requirements of the station and RSVP and that it is completely understood.

Volunteer hours are reported on a monthly basis and data requirements for reporting are also discussed to obtain this information. This can include surveys, pre and post testing, and time sheets. We will have a Safety and Accessibility Checklist completed for each volunteer station. RSVP staff considers the needs of the station and how each station can meet community needs not only in the Primary Focus Area, Healthy Futures, but also in Veterans and Military Families, Disaster Services, Education, Economic Opportunity and Environmental Stewardship. We closely work with volunteer stations to meet National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs. Measurement Data which consists of surveys, time sheets, and pre/post surveys is provided through a working partnership with the stations. RSVP needs to graduate volunteers to meet Corporation requirements in Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy counties. We are maximizing efforts to place volunteers in the required focus areas. Those volunteers who do not fit will be thanked for their longtime service to RSVP and the importance of the volunteer work they do will be emphasized. A letter will be send to each graduating volunteer station supervisor and graduating volunteers to ensure they understand how much his or her volunteer efforts have achieved throughout the years is appreciated. Their hours will no longer be counted for RSVP, and they will be encouraged to continue making a difference in their community. We will also notified them that they will no longer be included on the volunteer supplemental insurance. Graduating stations will also be thanked for their longtime commitment to the RSVP program and for the community needs they have met throughout the past 30 years. It will also be explained that The Memorandum of Understanding will expire when the station graduates.

The goal for the Sponsor and the RSVP Project is to carefully utilize the Federal Grant funds to meet Performance Measures in the three county areas served. To assist in our goals we will utilize a fraction of grant funds to provide direct support with recruiting and placement efforts, such as volunteer mileage reimbursement and volunteer supplemental insurance.

A system of checks and balances is also the best way of keeping track of volunteer stations. This is

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applicable to our program as much as it is for our volunteer stations. Our project is evaluated by two entities that have the community's best interest in mind. First, the RSVP Advisory Council convenes every other month to hear our progress reports and a summary of our upcoming activities and projects. They take this opportunity to ask questions in regards to the effectiveness of our tactics. It is also the time and place to express what measures we can take to improve and address community problems. At least three of the RSVP Advisory Council Members volunteer to perform an evaluation at RSVP volunteer stations and recommend changes, if needed, to improve services. Second, the Executive Director of the County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency our sponsor which provides our offices and partial funding, conducts quarterly board meetings in which she reports both programmatic and fiscal reports, as well as a yearly evaluation of our program. Here our records and actions are closely investigated. This evaluation is vital to our continued cooperation with the County and The County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency.

In order to manage information and data to demonstrate the impact of our project, we work even closer with volunteer stations, as mentioned earlier. Through a series of reports and visits we compile the information to the distinctive efforts of each station. The report is tailored specifically to the type of services the station provides and is personally administered by the RSVP Director and/or Coordinators. The visits are conducted on a monthly basis. While these are informal they serve in creating more familiarity between our programs and all the volunteer stations.

The managing of project resources of both financial and in-kind in order to ensure accountability and effective use of resources is something we do not take superficially. Once again we have a system of checks and balances to create accountability. Since The County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency houses our offices and provides partial funding they oversee all of our financial transactions. The Fiscal Department review every receipt and expenditure to make sure they are justifiable. While we decide how to allocate our funds to best serve the community, this form of supervision provides complete credibility to our financial activities.

We receive thirty percent of our funding from local and state monies and seventy percent from federal grants. This money allows us to effectively serve the community of an entire year, but makes it difficult to honor our volunteers in a manner deserving of their selflessness. In order to have our annual volunteer recognition banquet, treat our volunteers during Volunteer Week in April and May

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Senior Citizens Month we are left needing additional funds. To meet this need the RSVP Advisory Council solicits local businesses, such as, banks, lawyers, and insurance agencies for monetary and in-kind contributions. This has proven to be a very effective method of securing resources to sustain the goals of our project.

Organizational Capability

The County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency (CHCSA) was established in the late 1960's as part of the county's War on Poverty, specifically as a Community Action Agency (CAA) then identified as the Associated City-County Economic Development Corporation (ACCEDC). The agency operated under a non-profit charter under the auspices of the County of Hidalgo in the late 1970's and early 1980's as the non-profit, County of Hidalgo Economic Development Agency, until 1986 when it was renamed to its present identity.

The County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency's mission is consistent with the mission of all Community Action Agencies which is to change people's lives, embody the spirit of hope, improve communities, and make America a better place to live. As a Community Action Agency, we care about the entire community and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other. County of Hidalgo Community Service matrix through a four departmental structure comprises of thirty eight (38) employees.

County of Hidalgo Community Service matrix consistent of the following departments:

Emergency Services Unit (ESU) Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Central Client File System (CCFS), Fiscal Department and Administration Department.

The County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency key management staff include: Executive Director, 28 years at current position with five years experience as an RSVP Project Director. BS (Human Services)

The County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency fiscal Department oversees twelve to fifteen federal, state, and private/local funding sources each year. The fiscal department adheres to client services, notice of payments, vendor invoices, bank reconciliations, financial reconciliations, journal entries, and employee's payroll. The fiscal department responsibility is to utilize and perform the applicability of fiscal procedures as set forth by federal, state, and private/local funding sources, single audit and contractual compliances.

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The Fiscal Department is a nine staff department consisting of the following: A principal Accountant for annual accounting or a second accountant for pay roll management and eight (8) Financial Accounting Specialists/Accounting Specialists. The Department maintains and performs all necessary tasks in general accounting/financials, account payables, and payroll. Staff adheres to all policies, regulations, and accounting principles. The County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency operates a SAGE Fund System that produces all pertinent financial reports, accounts payables, and employees' payroll.

The Fiscal Department at all times maintains security and integrity of all fiscal duties affecting financial and its reports, account payables (vendors) and employee's payroll

The County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency has provided RSVP with offices from which we served Hidalgo County for a little over thirty years. Since then the project has expanded to serve to the entire tri-county area of Hidalgo, Willacy and Cameron counties. The agency has also demonstrated strong support for RSVP, as the Executive Director served as RSVP Project Director for five years, matching all funds awarded through grants.

But money does not secure success. Only the people involved can make a difference. RSVP possesses a healthy combination of experience and education. The Project Director has twenty nine years of experience working with the elderly and has been with this project for more than a decade. She worked for ten years for the Area Agency on Aging where she gained the knowledge and the skills to address issues pressing older adults. She serves on many committees such as The South Texas Senior Summit planning committee, Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and many others. Her expertise is often sought by other agencies. Her role is to supervise program staff, monitor staff performance, maintaining work schedules and generate required reports. She maintains program quality by planning annual program goals and objectives designed to meet critical community needs while offering opportunities for seniors to maintain their self esteem and usefulness through service to their community. The Project Director also develops positive public relations and communication in the community by promoting informational programs to interested groups and organizations. She maintains close coordination with volunteer stations, active involvement with community organizations, other National Service Programs and other Senior Volunteer Programs.

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Two RSVP Area Coordinators with a combination of 13 years of direct experience with the RSVP Program. They assist with the coordinating of project activities, coordinating and monitoring RSVP volunteer assignments, trainings, supervisory arrangements, and other activities in cooperation with appropriate volunteer station staff. Area Coordinators assist in making periodic visits to volunteer stations to monitor the satisfaction of the RSVP volunteers with their assignments. Their expertise helps recruit and performing the necessary duties.

The RSVP Advisory Council is comprised of 14 members representing all three counties served. The men and women serving on the Advisory Council represent Hispanic, Caucasian and veterans, non-seniors as well as seniors. Some are RSVP Volunteer Station Supervisors. These important members review the federal financial reports, participate on RSVP program evaluations, attend the Advisory Council meetings and assist with RSVP projects. The desire of the staff, Advisory Council Members and sponsor is to continue to improve the quality of the RSVP program and meet Performance Measures.

The Rio Grande Valley RSVP has been managing volunteers for the past 30 years. RSVP staff has the Volunteer Reporter software and we track all our volunteers, volunteer hours and volunteer stations. Volunteers have a proven track record they can make a difference for others by providing emergency food assistance at the food pantries in the counties served and are delivering meals to homebound seniors and disabled including veterans. RSVP Volunteers also assist at 3 local elementary schools by tutoring students who are reading below level. Volunteers also provide assistance with ESL Classes for the youth and adults so they can progress in life. RSVP Volunteers assist the American Red Cross with Disaster Services (volunteers distribute disaster and preparedness information during the hurricane season). 2 RSVP volunteers at the American Red Cross assisted the victims during Hurricane Sandy in New York. Volunteers also assist at the VA Clinic at the pharmacy filing documents pertaining to veterans. They also provide direction and guidance or escort the veterans as they come in to the clinic. (One RSVP volunteer is a veteran.)

The Fiscal Department also has the ability and responsibility to question any spending to ensure that these actions are not frivolous or misappropriated. While this process is rather extensive it does not hinder RSVP's ability to manage volunteer stations.

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The County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency financial management system is a SAGE FUND System that incorporates general ledger, accounts payable, cash reconciliation, check disbursement and other accounting department function. County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency has 30 years experience and has a successful management of all financial systems. When our sponsor agency or RSVP receives funds, whether it is by grants or other sources, the General Accountant creates the budget and together with the Executive Director and Project Director, we oversee all expenditures to ensure appropriate spending.

We have a near perfect continuation rate with our volunteer programs which are dependable and have never been a liability to our goals. Most volunteer stations continue to serve the community through RSVP Volunteers. At some volunteer stations changes have been made and RSVP has worked with them in spite of these hurdles. In volunteer stations, where tutors are placed, HOSTS Programs have closed and RSVP volunteers have willingly moved to campuses with operating HOSTS Programs. Volunteer supervisors regularly report their gratitude for our involvement and inform us on how please they are with the volunteers. Volunteers themselves express their joy to staff members. The best indicator of our success within the community is the joint effort we have with other programs. Our services are actively sought by Senior Companions, Foster Grandparents, Hidalgo County Head starts, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Texas Cooperative Extension, Edinburg Housing Authority, and other local organizations.

County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency guarantees that RSVP is never left without the proper capacity to assist the community. The County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency Main office houses the RSVP Program. A budget is created annually by the General Accountant which includes all necessary technological upgrades in software and hardware. The budget also includes all office supplies and equipment and is based on needs expressed by the RSVP staff. Four new computers were recently purchased and are also hooked up to the network. Staff is very happy with these new computers which makes our job easier. Purchasing procedures are based on a lowest bidder setup. The County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency has accounts with numerous office supply stores, general stores, technology providers and other retail chains. The sponsor agency conducts a search for the needed products and the company with the lowest bid is awarded the contract. In addition to the supplies, the sponsor agency also provides training sessions and funds RSVP to attend conferences

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important for the improvement of the project.

The roles for staff and administrator are clearly defined. The staff answers to the administration and the Executive Director has the final word on any spending, transaction to proposed activity.

Self-assessment is a primary issue for the County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency. The Executive Director and Fiscal Department are the main source of compliance and review each other's work to ensure effectiveness. This measure is taken to provide the appropriate information to the County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency Board. This Advisory Committee conducts their own review of all proceedings that the sponsor agency undertakes and provides recommendations on improvements. The Executive Director also conducts an annual evaluation of all five major departments and occasionally conducts program evaluations as required throughout the year. The County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency strives for continuous improvement and self assessment for program effectiveness and efficiency.

RSVP has been very fortunate to have the sponsorship of the County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency. This Agency has shown their commitment to RSVP for the last 30 years with support and consideration. Our greatest benefit is having an Executive Director who once worked with RSVP and is fully aware of the different needs of our project. A partnership is continuously sought for the near and distant future.

Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A