

Narratives

Executive Summary

Beginning in 1965 as a direct result of the War on Poverty, Community Action Council has had a long history offering opportunities to assist individuals and families to become more self-sufficient. With nearly 18 percent of the population of residents in the RSVP service areas in Central Kentucky living below the federal poverty threshold, there remains a strong need for the Council to continue offering senior volunteer programs for activities which align closely with the Council's mission "to combat poverty." As a result of extensive data collection and community needs assessment described in this proposal, the Council's RSVP program will annually recruit and equip at least 200 volunteers (total 600 over the course of three years) to serve in at least 29 station sites under the Primary Focus Area of Economic Opportunity. For each of the three years, the Council's RSVP program will maintain at least 80 unduplicated volunteers, or 40 percent, serving in the Primary Focus Area of Economic Opportunity and resulting in 22 percent of unduplicated volunteers being placed in workplans with outcomes specifically targeting participants' capacity to obtain a general education development (GED) or gainful employment. To that end, of these 80 volunteers, a total of 44 volunteers will complete activities such as academic tutoring and instructing classes to increase computer skills. As a result of these activities, it is annually anticipated that a minimum of 15 individuals will enter the workforce. In further support of the Primary Focus Area, annually 36 volunteers will assist participants to become more financially literate. The following are the service activities these 36 volunteers will complete. Volunteers will assist at least 100 individuals to file their tax returns through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA). Additionally, RSVP volunteers will educate participants on preventing elder abuse or assist them to become more financially literate by attending sessions facilitated by RSVP volunteers on how to construct a budget and improve or begin credit history. No more than 60 unduplicated volunteers, or 30 percent, will offer activities meeting identified community need under the Community Priorities category, including; energy assistance education, providing companionship to individuals and veterans and reading to residents with special health needs. The remainder of the Council's volunteers, 30 percent, will support activities described in the narrative under Other Focus Area & Capacity Building category.

The total funding request for the program and all services outlined in this proposal is \$127,921 annually, which includes an annual program match of \$38,395.

Strengthening Communities

Community Action Council for Lexington-Fayette, Bourbon, Harrison, and Nicholas Counties, Inc.

Narratives

(henceforth referred to as the Council) is a nonprofit organization established in 1965 to address the causes and effects of poverty and to, ultimately, strengthen the communities it serves. The Council's history and value system are deeply rooted in the civil rights and poverty reform movements of the 1960s and for the past five decades it has worked diligently to form partnerships with local organizations and entities dedicated to upholding these values. A long-term goal of the Council has been to serve as a strong, effective, proactive and resourceful leader and participant in the communities it serves. To achieve this goal, the Council is continually collaborating with other non-profit organizations, businesses, community groups and government agencies, developing a strong network of resources and ensuring that program participants have a safety net for crisis situations and plans and approaches to long term solutions.

Though the Council's mission statement of "to combat poverty" is abbreviated, the activities and services it offers to carry out that mission are comprehensive. All of the Council's programs and initiatives are designed using the most current data based on feedback from ongoing community-based needs assessment, analysis of local, state and national data as well as other direct input from program participants, Board members and Council stakeholders. Based on this comprehensive assessment, currently the Council focuses its resources on individual and family development (including social and economic opportunity or self-sufficiency), child development, offering activities and supports that will lead to employment, health, transportation, safety net (emergency) services, housing services, other aspects of economic opportunity such as financial literacy, technology, and volunteerism.

In order to understand the needs of the services areas of Lexington-Fayette, Bourbon, Harrison, Jessamine and Nicholas Counties outlined in this application, it is first important to understand some of their basic demographics. The following is a description of the characteristics of the diverse populations of people in these urban, suburban, and rural communities. All of the demographic information in the following overview is based on the most recent U.S. Census Bureau data, or the 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates

Central Kentucky is located in the central and southern portion of the Bluegrass Region of Kentucky. Lexington (officially Lexington-Fayette Urban County) is the second-largest metropolitan area in Kentucky. Lexington has a population of 292,370 people, anchoring a metropolitan area of 425,437 people. The Lexington-Fayette Urban County metro area is comprised of six counties, including Lexington-Fayette, Clark, Jessamine, Bourbon, Woodford and Scott counties. Of the 122,075 total households in Lexington, 18.0 percent were comprised of individuals over the age of 65 living alone

Narratives

and 71,125 were families living together. On average, household size in Lexington-Fayette is 2.29 persons with an average family size of 2.89. The median income for a household in the city is \$48,306. Lexington has a diverse population in terms of age distribution, with 24.9 percent of the population under the age of 19; 40.6 percent between the ages of 20-44; 24.2 percent between the ages of 45-64; and 10.4 percent over the age of 65. The median age for this area is 33.6. The ethnic diversity of the city is 76.5 percent White, 14.4 percent Black or African American, 0.2 percent Native American, 3.4 percent Asian, 0.1 percent Pacific Islander, 0.6 percent reporting two or more races and 6.5 percent Hispanic or Latino origin.

Bourbon County has a population of 19,987 people. Bourbon County is home to 7,933 total households, 27.8 percent of which were individuals over the age of 65, living alone. Of the total households, 5,449 were families living together. On average, household size in Bourbon County is 2.49 persons with an average family size of 2.99. The median income for a household in the city is \$42,192. Bourbon County's age distribution includes 26.1 percent of population under the age of 19; 30.3 percent between the ages of 20-44; 27.8 percent between the ages of 45-64; and 15.7 percent over the age of 65. The median age for this area is 40.1 years. The ethnic diversity of the county is 90.0 percent White, 7.0 percent Black or African American, 0.4 percent Native American, 0.4 percent Asian, 0.0 percent Pacific Islander, 2.3 percent reporting two or more races and 6.2 percent Hispanic or Latino origin.

Harrison County has a population of 18,823 people. Harrison County is home to 7,172 total households. Of these 4,694 were families living together and 26.6 percent were individuals, age 65 and older, living alone. On average, household size in Harrison County is 2.59 persons with an average family size of 3.28. The median income for a household in the city is \$38,690. The ethnic makeup of this county is 95.0 percent White, 2.8 percent Black or African American, 0.3 percent Native American, 0.2 percent Asian, 0.0 percent Pacific Islander, 0.3 percent reporting two or more races and 1.8 percent Hispanic or Latino origin. Harrison County's age distribution includes 26.4 percent of population under the age of 19; 30.3 percent between the ages of 20-44; 28.5 percent between the ages of 45-64; and 15.7 percent over the age of 65. The median age for this area is 40.9 years.

Jessamine County has a total population of 47,880 people. Of the 17,797 total households in Jessamine County, 13,391 are families living together, and 6.2 percent of individuals are over the age of 65, living alone. The average household size in Jessamine County is 2.59 persons with an average family size of 2.98. The median income for a household in the city is \$48,547. The ethnic diversity of this county is 93.8 percent White, 3.2 percent Black or African American, 0.2 percent Native

Narratives

American, 0.8 percent Asian, 0.0 percent Pacific Islander, 1.6 percent reporting two or more races and 2.7 percent Hispanic or Latino origin. Jessamine County's age distribution includes 29.1 percent of population under the age of 19; 34.1 percent between the ages of 20-44; 25.7 percent between the ages of 45-64; and 11.1 percent over the age of 65. The median age for this area is 35.5.

With a population of 7,120 people, Nicholas County is the smallest and most rural county in the identified service areas. Nicholas County is home to 2,798 total households of which 2,026 are families living together, 26.7 percent of which were individuals, over the age of 65, living alone. On average, household size in Nicholas County is 2.50 persons with an average family size of 2.90. The median income for a household in the city is \$39,586. Nicholas County's age distribution includes 25.7 percent of population under the age of 19; 31.0 percent between the ages of 20-44; 27.9 percent between the ages of 45-64; and 14.7 percent over the age of 65. The median age for this area is 39.1. Nicholas County is the least ethnically diverse county within the identified service area, comprised of 98.9 percent of the population identifying as White, 0.5 percent as Black or African American, 0.0 percent Native American, 0.1 percent Asian, 0.0 percent Pacific Islander, 0.0 percent reporting two or more races and 1.4 percent Hispanic or Latino origin.

Coinciding with the analyzing of local, state and national data outlined later in the narrative, Council staff approached assessing community need for its proposed RSVP program in two ways. The first is through a specific needs assessment survey requested from all current RSVP volunteers and station sites. The second way is through the Council's five year strategic planning process. A needs assessment survey was delivered to all current RSVP station sites supervisors and volunteers. Of the total collected responses, greater than 70 percent indicated the most critical need that should be addressed by senior volunteers in the service areas is Economic Opportunity, specifically support to increase educational attainment and understanding financial matters.

In late 2012, the Council began preparing for its year-long process of creating a five year Strategic Plan designed to set forth the Council' goals for operation from 2014-2018. In addition to collecting and analyzing data, the strategic planning process, currently underway, further assesses community need through a total of 17 separate strategic plan focus groups in each of the Council's service areas. Each of these focus groups are comprised of a minimum of 7 individuals representing program participants, legislators and community members, stakeholders, Board members, and Council staff. Each of these focus groups contained 17 questions designed to assess the various needs of the community including; economic opportunity and employment; transportation; child development services; emergency or "safety net" services, as well as safe and affordable housing, and volunteerism.

Narratives

The following are two questions included in each of the focus groups:

What skills do you think people need in order to obtain sustainable employment?

What would you say are the top three barriers to economic advancement or income potential?

Greater than 90 percent of the responses to these questions identified a need for access to; resume building information; job readiness training; interview skills; and mentoring "soft skills" such as communicating with a boss or colleagues. Additionally, respondents indicated that people with low-income could benefit from assistance with financial planning and budgeting. All of these activities most closely align with the focus area of Economic Opportunity.

A review of current local, state and national data further emphasize the need for the Council to put forth a proposal allocating 40 percent of senior volunteer support to be primarily focused on increasing Economic Opportunity. Currently, the average rate of individuals without a high school diploma or equivalency in the identified service areas is 17.86 percent. Without a high school diploma, a person's earning potential-their economic mobility-over a lifetime is significantly reduced. In fact, according to the US Census, the difference in average annual earnings between those with and without a high school diploma is \$7,000. Nationally, a recent study by Georgetown University shows that obtaining a high school diploma adds 33 percent more to lifetime earnings and is a critical tool to fight poverty and gain economic opportunities. To compound that statistic, though there are signs the economy continues to improve slowly, the current unemployment rate for Lexington remains high at 7.2 percent and is higher in the surrounding rural services areas with a combined average rate of 8.22 percent. In addition to research on education and employment rates, the Council also monitors information related to financial literacy rates and living wage. Recently Fayette County Public School system, the largest public school system of the identified service areas, recommended that financial literacy information be included in their curriculum, basing their recommendation on findings from a national study conducted by Nellie May Education Foundation. The findings conclude that the financial literacy of youth and young adults as well as seniors is of growing concern. Surveyed youth received slightly better than a score of 52 percent on matters related to financial literacy and 56 percent of families believe that their children are not adequately prepared to manage their finances, which is the very definition of "financial literacy." The financial literacy of individuals is exacerbated when viewed in the context of those living below the Federal Poverty Threshold. Calculated for a family of four, the current Federal Poverty Guideline is \$23,550. According to recent data captured in Nation of Exchange, 40 percent of individuals make less than the standard of minimum wage earnings in 1968.

Narratives

Data collection and measurement are essential components in measuring the impact, effectiveness and the return on investment of programs designed to assist individuals on the path toward self-sufficiency or in meeting identified community needs. The Council's Division for Program Development is responsible for the ongoing collection and analysis of data to help support the oversight of all of the Council's program operations, including RSVP. With guidance from Program Development, the RSVP Project Director (henceforth referred to as the Volunteer Coordinator) and Volunteer Services Manager will regularly and accurately collect data based on the activities of the National Performance Measures previously described in the section "Strengthening Communities." By continually evaluating the program and tracking outputs and outcomes, the Volunteer Coordinator ensures program compliance and volunteer retention, discussed in greater detail later in the narrative. RSVP utilizes Volgistics software to manage program data and program results. All outcomes of programs, including RSVP, operated by the Council are measured using the Council's Results Oriented Management and Accountability system, or ROMA. ROMA provides the Council with the flexibility to allow for the CNCS National Performance Measures to be incorporated into the agency-wide performance report. All programs, operations and systems establish measurable outcomes annually, assess progress quarterly and revise or update planning and operations based on results. These outcomes are reviewed quarterly by the Council's Board of Directors and its senior management team, the Strategic Leadership Group.

With all of the research in mind, as well as the excellent track record of the Council to effectively identify, track and meet outcomes, the Council is putting forth this application to continue to operate the RSVP program with a selected Primary Focus Area of Economic Opportunity. The other focus area that will be addressed, based on community response and data, is Healthy Futures. The following is an overview of the workplans that have been designed based on a response to community need and the associated outputs and outcomes for their respective focus areas. These workplans and target numbers are annual, and will be tracked and reported in accordance with CNCS and the Council's reporting requirements.

Of the 29 volunteer stations, RSVP will form relationships with at least 18 sites directly supporting Economic Opportunity activities, placing as many as 44 volunteers each year to assist at least 50 individuals with resume building, mock interviews, computer skills, increasing literacy and numeracy scores and communication skills. All of these activities are intended to increase the ability, self-esteem and educational outcomes of program participants which will lead to gainful employment. It is anticipated that each year, 15 participants will obtain employment, which will be tracked and recorded

Narratives

by program records as well as copies of the check stub. It is also anticipated that 15 participants will obtain a GED, which will also be tracked by program records.

Annually, 3 stations will support 10 volunteers work to increase the financial literacy of at least 40 participants. Senior volunteers will support the increase of financial literacy rates of program participants by facilitating classes to help participants understand credit history and other financial topics such as budget management and developing a savings plan. Included in this aspect of financial literacy is elder abuse prevention. Annually, at least 16 senior volunteers will offer information sessions on preventing elder abuse with an emphasis on financial abuse or exploitation. Financial and material exploitation of an elder is defined as the illegal or improper use of an elder's funds, property, or assets. RSVP volunteers will provide senior-directed financial literacy training to assist seniors in identifying potential threats to their assets and property, predatory lending practices, and Medicare fraud. In addition to these workplans, annually 10 RSVP volunteers will work with VITA and collectively assist at least 100 individuals to complete their tax returns. It is expected that 22 percent of the workplans created by the Council will result in outcomes that align with its primary focus area of Economic Opportunity.

Though the largest percentage of senior service activity will be in pursuit of fulfilling Economic Opportunity, the Council also plans to place the remaining 30 percent of its total unduplicated volunteers in activities that meet needs under Other Focus Area & Capacity Building, most notably those pertaining to the focus area of Healthy Futures and food security and childhood obesity. As the data below will show, there is a high need to improve access to healthy foods, particularly as the communities currently served by RSVP are still facing the impacts of the recent economic downturn. In Kentucky, approximately 15-20% of children ages 2-4 from low-income homes are obese. In 2012, one in four families reported that they were 'food insecure' at least one time during the year and recent local reports indicate that there are at least six "food deserts" in Lexington and its surrounding areas. As such, the Council's RSVP volunteers will be completing service activities designed to increase food security and access to nutritious foods. Often, food deserts result in urban and rural areas in which local grocers vacate the community, leaving only convenience stores and fast food restaurants, which offer limited nutritional food items. Creating and maintaining community gardens is one example of an initiative in which senior volunteers will work to address issues of food insecurity. In the most recent completed fiscal year, the Council made 8,841 food referrals to local food pantries and of that, 6,724 referrals were made to God's Pantry, the largest coordinated food pantry in Kentucky. In support of Healthy Futures, 52 volunteers will annually provide services and support to 14 stations

Narratives

dedicated to addressing issues of food security through food and commodities collection and distribution as well as referrals to local food banks and pantries. At least eight volunteers will assist with developing and maintaining community gardens at a minimum of two station sites. All of these activities will be tracked and reported based on the use of attendance logs.

In an effort to continue to address community needs, under the category of Community Priorities, a maximum of 30 percent of the Council's unduplicated RSVP senior volunteers will continue its ongoing commitment to activities for which the Council is most frequently approached to provide assistance. The activities are; support to veterans and military families; companionship to individuals in local hospitals, offering energy education assistance and reading support for individuals with visual impairment or other health needs. More information about these service activities and the justification for their determination is provided below.

Veterans risk their lives and sacrifice precious time with their families to protect us and the freedom we all enjoy. It is estimated that there are as many as 92,000 veterans living in the greater Central Kentucky area. Veterans who return from overseas may experience homelessness due to a variety of factors such as experiencing effects of post-traumatic stress disorder and having limited social supports. In 2012 and 2013, the Council's Senior Corps programs' MLK Day project was Back-a-Vet. During the Back-a-Vet event volunteers filled a minimum of 75 backpacks with needed items such as toothbrushes and toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo and conditioner, shaving cream and disposable razors, socks, bottled water and nutrition bars. These bags were distributed to veterans experiencing homelessness through the Council's partnerships with the Hope Center, the Catholic Action Center, and other like-minded organizations that provide shelter and other needed services to veterans and others experiencing homelessness. The Back-a-Vet program has only been in existence for a few years, but due to resonance with members of the community it has grown rapidly and it is as a result of the response from the community that the Council will continue to offer this program annually and will track its outputs. The Council's RSVP program also plans to pursue offering "Comfort Kits" to veterans in the local veteran hospitals. With donations from hotels and grocery stores for items such as mini shampoo bottles, toothpastes, and coffee and tea, the Council's RSVP program will distribute these "Comfort Kits" to veterans who have been admitted to the hospital for a long-term stay. In addition to these services described, the Council is regularly approached to provide what is termed "companionship" services to individuals in long-term critical medical situations in both local veteran and mainstream hospitals. These activities include escorting patients, providing temporary relief to patients' families and other activities such as reading.

Narratives

Each year, the Council completes more than 11,000 applications for energy assistance. Along with monetary energy assistance, the Council offers energy education to educate its participants in an effort to help residents conserve resources and reduce energy consumption. Of the 6,690 energy assistance education sessions offered by the Council in the most recent fiscal year, 546 were offered by volunteers.

Central Kentucky Radio Eye annually collaborates with more than 150 volunteers to generate more than 80,000 hours of audio programming for individuals with visual impairments and other health needs, relying almost entirely on volunteer support as the organization has only two staff members. It is with these requests from community-based organizations and the need in mind that the Council is proposing to annually place a maximum of 60 volunteers at a combined 13 stations sites throughout the service areas to complete the activities described.

Recruitment and Development

The comprehensive protocol for recruitment and development for the Council's RSVP program is reflective of its strong program oversight and governance. As previously described, the Council strives to obtain local input on program design and evaluation in recognition of the ethnically, culturally and socioeconomically diverse population residing in Central Kentucky. One example of this effort is that the Council's tripartite Board of Directors is comprised equally of public servants and officials, representatives from the private sector, such as local civic and business leaders, and community members with low-income. The Board ultimately guides all of the Council operations, including the determination of where limited resources are best-utilized, and ensures that the Council serves a diverse population representative of the community.

All of the Council's volunteer services programs, which currently include the RSVP program, the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) and other volunteers, are supervised by the Volunteer Services Manager and overseen by the Council's Volunteer Services Advisory Council (VSAC). VSAC is made up of volunteers, station supervisors, and other community representatives, described in more detail later in this narrative. As mentioned earlier, the Council carefully selects its RSVP community partners with respect to the needs of the community which are identified through ongoing needs assessment. Through the development of strategic partnerships with a variety of organizations, the Council has established and strengthened a network that is well-equipped to meet the needs outlined under "Strengthening Communities" and to combat all facets of poverty and their associated hardships.

All RSVP workplans, activities and the tracking of corresponding outputs and outcomes will be the

Narratives

responsibility of the Volunteer Coordinator, with oversight from the Council's Volunteer Services Manager. The manner in which volunteers will be supported and monitored includes monthly site visits, attendance sign in sheets, tracking of mileage reimbursement and regular communication by the Volunteer Coordinator with volunteers as requested or as needed. In addition, RSVP workplans, service activities and budgets are provided to the VSAC and to the Council's Board of Directors as needed and feedback and recommendations provided by these groups are integrated into program planning and reporting. The oversight provided by these groups is critical. The information relayed by these governance groups allows all station sites to adequately prepare volunteers to address identified community needs in the primary and other focus areas by providing non-profits and like-minded organizations within the community with labor and skills that might otherwise be unattainable. A well-placed and well-trained volunteer can free up time and resources in an organization, enabling that agency to better prioritize its limited resources to fulfill its mission. The Council's existing relationships with nearly 30 volunteer stations will facilitate the smooth integration of senior volunteers into the service activities to meet the need of these organizations.

One of the primary job functions of the Volunteer Coordinator is to support and strengthen the RSVP program through effective communication with station partners and volunteers. Station partners are selected carefully with a focus on the organizations' ability to address critical community needs with limited resources.

The Council has operated its RSVP program since 1999 and, if awarded, will continue to follow its comprehensive procedures for the recruitment and development of senior volunteers already in place. To that end, the following information outlines the Council's plan and infrastructure to create high quality volunteer assignments by providing the proper training to equip volunteers and by matching a volunteer's skills and talents with activities designed to meet specific needs in one of the Council's assessment-driven focus areas.

Recruitment activities take place through a variety of face-to-face activities in which the Volunteer Coordinator, armed with posters, flyers and other literature describing the Council's RSVP program and its community-driven focus areas, actively and directly engages seniors over the age of 55. With support from the Volunteer Services Manager, the Volunteer Coordinator will organize ongoing recruitment by attending various community events at a minimum of twice a month. Some examples of these community events are county and city fairs; neighborhood and community health fairs; volunteer fairs and Back to School events. Coinciding with the broad community-based events, the Volunteer Coordinator will continue to visit local community centers and Senior Centers. Recruitment

Narratives

will also continue to occur in the form of letters and promotional materials distributed through email and the postal service to faith-based organizations, neighborhood associations, social service providers, retirement communities and health care facilities. Aiding in this full-scale recruitment process is the Council's social media presence on Facebook and Twitter. According to an article published in 2011, seniors age 55 and older are the fastest growing segment of the population embracing social media as a means of social engagement and communication. This trend makes use of Facebook and Twitter as a means of disseminating Council information and service opportunities as an effective means of communication with the senior population or those serving the senior population. Additionally, the Council's RSVP program will continue to be supported by its Public Information Specialist, responsible for overseeing external communications with all print and television media to ensure that all events hosted by the RSVP program are properly advertised.

The Council knows the importance that well-developed, high-quality RSVP volunteer assignments play in the success of both RSVP volunteers and station partners. Even more than that, the Council recognizes that correctly pairing a well-trained, uniquely-skilled senior volunteer with a community need creates an opportunity for cross-generational learning that is largely unavailable with other volunteer programs. Through the development of new partnerships and continued relationship building with those already in existence, the RSVP program has an established community-based network with whom senior volunteers have the opportunities to share their experiences, abilities and skills to improve their communities and themselves through service. One example of where this can occur is in the RSVP program's revitalized Winburn community garden project.

Community gardens are unique spaces, providing a vast range of benefits to gardeners and surrounding community members. Community gardens provide citizens with the physical space for natural engagement and increased social interaction and are also areas in which cross-cultural and cross-generational learning can take place. Cross-generational learning refers to the transfer of knowledge between individuals of different generations. In the community garden setting, this exchange is done naturally, but intentionally, and sharing is often based on knowledge of gardening techniques and practices, but may also include experiences and knowledge gained over a lifetime. Cross-cultural learning may involve culturally appropriate food items and gardening practices, as well as culturally significant mores and values. Through the investment of time and energy and armed with a skill a volunteer is passionate about, senior community gardeners actively work together to beautify their communities, improve nutritional habits and offer food to those in need, and share valuable knowledge and experiences. It is service opportunities like the one just described that makes

Narratives

the Council's RSVP program so successful. Not only can the Council's activities within the community-driven focus areas be quantified and measured, there are also embedded benefits to the volunteers and community members that are equally as significant.

Over the years, the RSVP program has become adept in addressing many issues that often arise when working with 200 or more volunteers at any given time, including; training, placement of volunteers near to their home, and responding to the special needs of volunteers in an expedient and thoughtful manner. All volunteers who self-identify as having a special need will receive individual attention and every reasonable adaptation or modification will be provided to help that volunteer in the way that is most beneficial to them. Special care is taken by the Volunteer Coordinator to encourage all volunteer stations to include their volunteers as an integral part of their organization, making them feel welcome and included in what is taking place. Senior volunteers with a special need, especially ones resulting in limited physical mobility, are managed with a coordinated effort between the Volunteer Coordinator and local transportation agencies equipped to transport individuals with disabilities. The Council's RSVP Volunteer Coordinator is deeply committed to involving those individuals for whom their "special need" is not as immediately obvious, in particular, seniors who suffer from anxiety, agoraphobia (the inability to comfortably leave home) or who have lost their spouse. The RSVP Volunteer Coordinator makes regular home visits with eligible seniors who have expressed interest in volunteering but are hesitant because of their personal circumstances and, by visiting them, reinforces the two concepts that are foundational to the Council's RSVP program; every volunteer has value and senior volunteering promotes healthy living.

The Council's RSVP program will continue to utilize a helpful tool known as Skills, Talent, Experience, Work, or STEW, to work with a volunteer to identify what aspect of the Council's identified focus areas and activities they would like to support. Once it has been determined which focus area the volunteer is the best suited for, the Volunteer Coordinator will provide training on the expectations of the Council's RSVP program. When completed, the Volunteer Coordinator will work with the corresponding station supervisor to ensure that the volunteer receives the proper training in order for the volunteer to feel comfortable and to be the most effective in that area.

Once a volunteer has been recruited, matched appropriately and trained on the RSVP Program's volunteer expectations, the volunteer will be introduced by the Volunteer Coordinator to their station site and meet with their direct supervisor. Every station supervisor, with guidance from the Volunteer Coordinator, will provide their own individualized orientation for the RSVP volunteers. By having the station supervisors implement their own training orientation, the volunteer will be informed and fully

Narratives

equipped to make the most impact in their community. All information on the number of volunteers and orientations provided at each station site will be collected and tracked by the Volunteer Coordinator.

The Council's RSVP program will continue to operate in both urban and rural environments, recruiting and working with diverse populations in terms of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and English language proficiency. Reflecting the population it serves is foundational to the way the Council operates all of its programs. As briefly mentioned before, the Council's Board of Directors is tripartite and is comprised of; one-third of people with low-income, and two-thirds of the public and private sector. Additionally, the race and ethnicity of Council staff members is a direct reflection of the population it serves and, as such, the Council is well-versed in recruiting diverse populations. RSVP program staff will continue outreach in the service area with groups such as the Urban League, NAACP, Area Agency on Aging and Independent Living, Independence Place, Lexington Fairness, Gay and Lesbian Services Organization, and area churches and media serving these populations. In addition, the Volunteer Coordinator will continue to engage veterans and military families with outreach to area organizations like the Veteran's Administration, Wounded Warriors, National College's Veteran's Retraining Assistance Program, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Disabled American Veterans.

As a result of the increase in the number of volunteers associated with the Council's RSVP Program, a partnership was formed by the Volunteer Coordinator with the Northern Kentucky Community Action Partnership Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) in 2011 to increase the administrative support for the program. If awarded this grant, this established partnership will remain and the Volunteer Coordinator will continue to supervise and train the SCSEP worker and, ultimately, prepare them to return to the workforce. For 13-15 hours per week, the SCSEP worker will perform essential administrative duties along with other services relating to program hospitality for volunteers.

The Council's RSVP program knows that retention of volunteers who are invested in the community is paramount to being able to effectively and seamlessly fill in the gaps and continue to meet the needs. To that end, the Council's RSVP Program has incorporated "volunteer retention" into its overall plan for recruitment and development. One aspect of volunteer retention that has been incorporated in the RSVP Program is that each volunteer will understand that they are valued and that they are an integral player in the overall success of the activities of the volunteer station and, by extension, the community in which they are serving. Elements of volunteer retention that have been and will

Narratives

continue to be incorporated in the Council's RSVP program are individual recognition of progress towards outcomes, consistent communication and encouragement of the volunteers through the station site supervisor. Volunteers will also be individually appreciated at annual recognition events. As previously captured, RSVP volunteers are valued members of the Council and integral to the success of the RSVP program and the Council's community outreach endeavors. As such, recognition of their contributions is of the utmost importance. The Volunteer Coordinator and Program Development staff organize a variety of events in celebration of their service, including Senior Sock Hops, Senior Socials, Health Fairs, and several others. At these events, RSVP volunteers may interact with each other and celebrate with food, music and fun. Additionally, volunteers are invited to take part in offered classes and sessions that promote health and wellness; improve computer literacy, and engage in opportunities for social engagement. Furthermore, every year since its inception, the Council's Volunteer Services Program has organized a luncheon designed to celebrate the individual and corporate achievements of all RSVP volunteers. The attendance of this event is usually more than 200 because joining the Council in its appreciation and admiration for the volunteers are their family members, other community members and government officials who recognize the impact of volunteer service. After careful planning and input from VSAC, the Volunteer Services Program hosts a full-scale event with guest speakers honoring the work of the volunteers, door prizes, live music and dancing and other entertainment. If awarded, the Council's RSVP program will continue to hold similar annual recognition events.

In addition to large recognition events, the Council's RSVP program will continue to value honoring volunteers in individual ways, too. The Council will continue to publish a Volunteer Services newsletter regularly, designed specifically to illuminate the time, talent and efforts of volunteers and to share the progress towards outcomes within each of the focus areas.

Program Management

The Volunteer Coordinator will recruit and retain at least 29 volunteer stations to fulfill the community needs identified in this proposal. Volunteer stations must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which are reviewed monthly to ensure program compliance, and the Volunteer Coordinator consults in the development of quality volunteer opportunity descriptions that must be approved prior to the first placement. Quarterly observation and assessment visits of volunteer stations ensure that the placements are appropriate and beneficial to the station and the volunteer, and that volunteers are performing their assigned service activities. In addition, these observations provide the Volunteer Coordinator with the opportunity for conducting ongoing

Narratives

assessment in order to ensure that volunteer stations are in compliance with RSVP program regulations. Finally, the Volunteer Coordinator fosters open lines of communication with all station supervisors, which positively impacts the relationship between the Council and its partner agencies. Through open communication, the RSVP program ensures that it is adept at meeting changing community needs with little disruption to volunteers, station partners or to the populations served by RSVP volunteers.

RSVP recognizes that as community needs shift over time, it may be necessary to graduate volunteer stations in order to continue to meet community needs. RSVP also recognizes that the minimization of disruption to volunteers, volunteer stations and the communities served is of the utmost importance. Through ongoing evaluation, the Volunteer Coordinator will continually assess needs and work to establish partnerships that will best address changing community needs as they arise. When assessment of community needs dictates the graduation of a station partner, the Volunteer Coordinator will schedule a meeting with the station supervisor in order to keep the partner informed and to facilitate a lasting relationship and a smooth transition. This 60-day transition period will be afforded to each graduated station to ensure that all paperwork and job duties are given sufficient time for conclusion. Individual RSVP volunteers stationed with the partner organization will be approached to ascertain their interest in transitioning to another station site. Volunteers that agree to be transitioned to another station site and that meet eligibility requirements will be provided with specialized training by the new station site supervisor. Whether a volunteer chooses to remain in their current placement or transition to a new station site, no volunteer is ever turned away, and may be provided the opportunity to continue volunteering through another of the Council's Volunteer Services Programs. The Council recognizes the inherent value of all volunteers and is committed to providing opportunities for all interested volunteers to serve in whatever capacity they choose.

As mentioned, the Volunteer Coordinator will conduct monthly meetings with the station site supervisors to assist with program assessment, individual orientation, evaluation and strategy to improve program performance and outcomes. In addition, the Volunteer Coordinator conducts annual reviews of project performance to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program and to recommend adjustments for program compliance and success. The Volunteer Coordinator also holds weekly meetings for volunteer administrative staff in order to assess process and outcome quality by reviewing key indicators including the number of participating volunteers, number of stations, volunteer hours, retention data, community impact, budget compliance and grant compliance. The information provided at staff meetings and through the annual review is utilized to identify concerns

Narratives

or problems as well as strategies for resolution. Furthermore, volunteers are asked to evaluate their volunteer stations and the quality of their volunteer experience on an annual basis. Finally, volunteers and station supervisors are encouraged to take advantage of the Council's commitment to open communication and its open door policy, accepting suggestions and innovative ideas for quality improvement via email, phone, mail or one to one conversations, on a continual basis. This information will be used to inform volunteer stations as well as RSVP staff and the results from these assessments will lead to continuous improvement and, by extension, an increase in the overall quality of the volunteer program within the station.

Compliance with federal regulations is of paramount importance to the Council's RSVP program. VSAC monitors the evaluation and assessment process for volunteers, staff, and partners. VSAC is able to work in collaboration with the Council's Program Development to add assessment questions to the Council's annual assessment of the community which identifies service gaps. In addition, this assessment allows this community participation group knowledge of community need in which they analyze outcomes to gauge the level of community impact. The Council shall consist of no less than 11 and no more than 25 persons. Roles and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, short and long-term planning and annual review of its own work and performance. Additional roles are to conduct an annual program evaluation and also to visit at least one site. VSAC members will demonstrate knowledge about the Council's RSVP program's place in the community and to identify trends in society affecting the field of service. With a liaison from VSAC on the Council's Board of Directors VSAC is able to; regularly communicate with the Board; provide entry to influential people; raise vital resources; share wisdom; implement program goals; suggest new programs; and attract new members to the VSAC.

Organizational Capability

As the current grantee for the RSVP program in the proposed service region, the Council is uniquely qualified to continue providing quality volunteer services without interruption. With an established program currently in operation, the Council has all programmatic elements in place, including dedicated fiscal and operational procedures. With an annual operating budget of more than \$25 million and more than 300 employees, the Council has a proven track record of grant management and organizational capability. As a recipient of multiple federal awards, the Council is experienced with successfully complying with federal, State and local reporting requirements. In FY 12, the Division for Fiscal Operations demonstrated its capacity for receiving, managing and implementing multiple funding streams, including 20 funding streams and 60 budgets through its fund accounting

Narratives

software. Revenue and expenses are accounted for and identified by each having a separate funding stream. The Council is subject to the Single Agency Audit Act and is audited annually. The independent auditor examines the Council's compliance with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-133. It continues to be the published opinion of the auditor that the Council is in compliance in all material aspects with the previously mentioned requirements and those applicable to each of the Council's major programs. In accordance with the most recent completed audit, the fiscal year budget ending June 30, 2012 was \$23,036,555 with in-kind contributions of more than \$2.5 million.

It is the policy of the Council that only costs that are reasonable, allowable and allocable to a federal award be charged to a grant award directly or indirectly.

The following steps shall be taken to identify allowable costs to this federal award from CNCS.

1. The budget and grant for each award shall be reviewed for allowable costs.
2. Accounting personnel shall refer to the allowability of costs provisions of OMB Circular A-122, "Costs Principles for Non-Profit Organizations" particularly:
 - a. The lists of specifically unallowable costs found in Attachment B, such as alcoholic beverages, bad debts, contributions, fines and penalties, lobbying, etc.
 - b. Those costs requiring advance approval from Federal agencies in order to be allowable in accordance with Attachment B, such as foreign travel, equipment purchases, etc.
3. No costs shall be charged directly to the federal award until the costs have been determined to be allowable under the terms of the award and/or OMB Circular A-122.
4. For this Federal award, an appropriate fund shall be established within Fundware with a set of allowable general ledger accounts that are identified in the award or the award budget.
5. All items of miscellaneous income or credits, including the subsequent write-off of uncashed checks, rebates, refunds, and similar items, shall be reflected as reductions in allowable expenditures if the credit relates to charges that were originally charged to a federal award.

It is the policy of the Council that all costs must meet the following criteria in order to be treated as allowable direct or indirect costs under a Federal award.

1. The costs must be "Reasonable" for the performance of the award, considering the following factors
 - a. Whether the costs is a type that is generally considered as being necessary for the operation

Narratives

of the organization or the performance of the award.

b. Restraints imposed by such factors as generally accepted sound business practices, arm's length bargaining, Federal and state laws and regulations, and the terms and conditions of the award.

c. Whether the individuals concerned acted with prudence in the circumstances.

d. Consistency with established policies and procedures of the organization, deviations from which could unjustifiably increase the costs of the award.

2. The costs must be "allocable" to an award by meeting one of the following criteria:

a. The cost is incurred specifically for a federal award.

b. The costs benefits both the Federal award and other work, and can be distributed in reasonable proportion to the benefits received, or

c. The cost is necessary to the overall operation of the organization, but a direct relationship to any particular program cannot be demonstrated.

3. The costs must conform to any limitations or exclusions of OMB Circular A-122 or the Federal award itself.

4. Treatment of costs must be consistent with policies and procedures that apply to both federally financed activities and other activities of the organization.

A multi-tiered review is performed on each expenditure in order to eliminate the likelihood of an unallowable cost. However, in the unlikely event that a cost is determined to be unallowable the Manager for Fiscal Operations and the Office of the Executive Director reallocate those expenditures to unrestricted funds. Through this multi-faceted review process, the Council ensures accountability as well as the efficient and effective use of all available resources.

As described previously, RSVP staff will be responsible for all activities associated with the RSVP Program. Key staff positions are:

Ka'Sondra Brown, MPA, RSVP Volunteer Coordinator. Ms. Brown has been with the Council for 6 years. She previously served as a Family Service Worker at the Council's South Lexington Neighborhood Center where she recruited volunteers and coordinated volunteer activities for the Southeast Lexington Child Development Center. She holds a Master's Degree in public administration. The RSVP Volunteer Coordinator will serve at .81 FTE; as a result of decreased funding in 2011, with the remainder provided by the Senior Medicare Patrol program grant that is part of RSVP.

Cheryl Weiss, Administrative Assistant, Program Development, has been with the Council since September 2012 and provides support to both of the Council's Senior Corps projects, RSVP and FGP.

Narratives

Kathy Hughes, Volunteer Services Manager, supervises the Volunteer Coordinator and is responsible for providing assistance with developing the annual refunding proposal, grants management, and budget management. Ms. Hughes holds a bachelor's degree in public relations and has been with the Council since January 2011.

Charlie Lanter, Manager for Program Development, manages all of the organization's resource development, planning, media relations, evaluation, and volunteer activities. Mr. Lanter holds a bachelor's degree in print journalism and government and been with the organization since 2005. As mentioned, through an established partnership with the Senior Community Service Employment Program, a Program Aide will assist RSVP by providing administrative assistance 13-15 hours per week at no cost to RSVP.

Through university partnerships, interns will be recruited to assist RSVP with recruitment efforts and special initiatives.

Property and equipment purchased with federal funds are identified by an inventory tag and a record of inventory is maintained by the Facilities staff. A physical inventory is taken at a minimum of every two years. All acquisitions and dispositions are added to/taken from the inventory log and proper documentation is maintained as required by federal awards. Assets acquired wholly or partly with federal funds have the appropriate portion of the asset booked to the Grants Funded asset and depreciation accounts. The Council obtains approval from the funding source for disposal of assets with estimated fair market value of \$5,000 or more. Assets sold are given a Fair Market Value appraisal at time of disposition or are subject to an open bid process where the highest bidder receives the asset and the income is reported as program income.

The Council, as the incumbent grantee, has established a history of successfully operating the RSVP Program. As a result of its history and strong fiscal management of grants, as well as the organizational capacity and infrastructure associated with its nearly 50 year history, the Council is in an ideal position to provide uninterrupted services to senior volunteers, station partner sites and the populations served throughout the Central Kentucky service region. With a Volunteer Services staff dedicated to assisting seniors and populations with low-income, the Council's RSVP will continue to provide high-quality services aimed at maximizing resources and offering service to the most critical needs.

Other

N/A

Narratives

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A