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Executive Summary

An estimated 112 Franklin County RSVP volunteers will serve. Some of their activities will include Hospice, Companionship, Home Delivered Meals, Transportation, K-12 Tutoring, and assisting Veterans in need. The primary focus area of this project will be Healthy Futures - Aging in Place. At the end of the three-year grant, this program anticipates reaching over 500 of our home-bound and here to reach community members, and at least 100 children in need of tutoring. The CNCS federal investment of \$39,317.00 will be supplemented by over \$11,000.00 from NYS Office of the Aging and our Local United Way and in-kind donations over \$6,000.00.

Franklin County RSVP will volunteer hours of service to those that prove to be in need the most throughout Franklin County. The volunteer hours served will help not only the people served but their families as well. Volunteer hours will encourage healthy living and independence and help to combat loneliness and depression, and give the youth of our community an upper hand in education. These activities will be clearly outlined in writing between the volunteer station and the Franklin County RSVP, and will be reviewed annually to ensure all members are involved are engaging in a win -- win situation.

At the end of the three (3) year grant cycle, it is anticipated the community members being served will report they are able to live in their own homes because RSVP filled in the gaps in the primary focus areas outlined in the grant application.

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization. Catholic Charities was established by an act of the New York State Legislature in 1017. Catholic Charities mission stands on the foundation of three concepts: Responding, Inviting and Empowering. Catholic Charities covers the eight (8) northern most counties of New York State. The agency is committed to providing services to the most vulnerable members of our community. We feel that the RSVP fits in perfectly to our mission, and it would be an honor to host another CNCS senior program.

Strengthening Communities

Franklin County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) will serve a community of 51,000, according to 2011 data from the U.S. Census Bureau, which makes the region sparsely populated across its 1,697 square miles. This county is located in the northeastern corner of New York State with its northern edge bordering Canada, where the Adirondack Mountains and numerous lakes and rivers make the region a beautiful but challenging place to live and work. The county is rural, and hosts 28 small towns and villages and one Indian Reservation throughout its home. Malone is its county seat

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and its population is only 5904. The loss of industrial jobs, the diminished number of family farms and the availability of mostly state and government or seasonal jobs creates a bleak economic prognosis for this rural population.

The northeastern corner of New York has a non-diverse Caucasian population and residents attain education levels substantially lower than those for New York State (NYS). The population of young people is declining while the median age is higher than the statewide median age. 12.80 percent of the population is 65 or older, and there is a significant shift to aging in place and a growing elder population. Many of these elderly are isolated due to the reality that many of their children and grandchildren have moved away to seek gainful employment. The trend of unemployment hovering around 10% over the last three years demonstrates that the economics stressors in the North Country region are greater than those in a statewide average.

The economic downturn has squeezed the pocketbooks of our older residents who are struggling to maintain their homes, health and lifestyles. Over 13% of Franklin County's senior population 60+ are coping with poverty and 31% receive food stamps, based on the most recent American Community Survey from the U.S. Census Bureau. Many senior community members, including those who reside in the senior high rise building, rely on the subsidized NYS Nutrition Program for the Elderly for their one hot meal a day. Further, our heavy snowfalls, ice storms, and power outages literally leave the elderly to fend for themselves during these disastrous storms.

Many among the region's aging population, including veterans, lack reliable transportation but need to travel great distances to obtain medical care. There are over 4200 veterans residing in Franklin County. Almost 13% of the households in this rural region are without a vehicle for transportation. Public transportation is very limited in the outlying rural and mountainous areas. Additionally, the severe regional weather affects travel with heavy snowfall, winds, flooding and downed trees. The need to access healthcare is impacted by chronic disease, the higher than state average percentage of smokers, cancer rates, the incidence of coronary heart disease and stroke hospitalizations, and a diabetes rate higher than the national average.

Many home-bound and 65+ residents, particularly in Franklin County's outlying areas suffer from isolation which contributes to depression. This has been documented in those served by the Home Meal Delivery Programs of Franklin County. Acute loneliness of our community members 65+ contributes to health decline and premature admission into long term care facilities, as indicated in 2012 data from the Franklin County Office of the Aging.

Depressed economic conditions of the region have created the necessity and North Country tradition

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of neighbor helping neighbor. Community needs in the Priority Focus Area include accessing health care, and maintaining health in order to stay out of long-term care facilities. RSVP will carry out an array of services to help fill the gaps in identified community needs in the Priority Focus Area such as: transporting vets to the Albany VA, , driving frail elderly and disabled residents to essential medical appointments, providing respite for caregivers of hospice patients, encourage health management for seniors, providing companionship, making home meal deliveries for home-bound, and providing relief from social isolation for our community members.

The RSVP Program of Franklin County will work to combine forces with already in place agencies providing help to these individuals. There will be a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in place between RSVP and the joining agency to ensure proper tools are in place to measure, outcomes and outputs, collect and report the data that will be acceptable to CNCS performance measurements requirements via E-Grants.

Anticipated outcomes are that over 500 Franklin County residents will report they are able to continue to live independently with support from RSVP services.

Recruitment and Development

Franklin RSVP will seek volunteer placements which align with CNCS Performance Measures and high quality volunteer assignments. We will work with organizations in our communities to identify assignments that are critical to meet priority community need. We will cultivate a close relationship with elected officials, community leaders and agency directors to stay informed with ever changing needs.

To ensure the best experience for our volunteers, we will interview each new volunteer to determine interests, skills and talents. We will conduct site visits and follow-up phone calls or emails to ensure that the service activity meets expectations. We will seek volunteer opportunities that meet not only community needs but the interests of our volunteers, especially baby-boomers, as the newest generation of volunteers. We will furnish an updated RSVP Volunteer Handbook to each volunteer to provide a comprehensive reference guide.

We will provide appropriate training for Franklin County RSVP volunteers. Each station will have a training plan in place for volunteers and will agree to this in a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which will be renewed and updated every 3 three years to ensure all parties are benefiting from their relationship. Station leaders will receive the same Handbook that our volunteers receive that outlines roles and responsibilities in being an RSVP volunteer and partner.

Program staff will attend state and regional CNCS conferences, consortium and county meetings,

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workshops, and seminars to stay informed on trending topics in volunteerism. We will participate in webinars and tele-conferences and trainings conducted by Catholic Charities, the New York State Office for the Aging, United Way of the Adirondack Region, New York State Aging Agencies Unite Us and Mercy Care of the Adirondacks.

We plan to recruit a volunteer pool reflective of the demography of our area, which includes all races, ethnicities, veterans and their military families, and people with varying sexual orientations, languages and disabilities. Marks of diversity in this northern region are not racial but are socioeconomic, although Franklin County is a host for a Native American Village, known as the St. Regis Mohawk Reservation. Both New York State and the United States deal exclusively with the Tribal Council Chiefs in a government-to-government relationship. The RSVP program plans recruiting volunteers to assist with the Saint Regis Mohawk Office for the Aging which is the leader relative to all aging issues on behalf of all persons on the Saint Regis Mohawk Indian Reservation by helping the community plan for an aging population, and is achieved through advocacy, planning, and the development of and delivery of enhanced services which support and empower the elderly and their families.

We will actively recruit volunteers and Advisory Council members to represent an authentic North Country base utilizing the following markers: job and career history, life experience, balance between lifelong and "newcomer" residency, education level, and skills.

Utilizing the tools of Senior Sentinel, Senior Life and the North Country Catholic, and want-ads, we will target seniors for interests that coincide with CNCS Senior Corps strategic priorities. We will engage RSVP Advisory Council members as ambassadors to promote RSVP membership through personal and community contacts. We will publicize word-of-mouth as another valuable tool and encourage satisfied RSVP volunteers to get their friends involved in the organization.

To achieve successful outreach, staff and RSVP Advisory Council members will attend events such as volunteer fairs, issue-oriented fairs, and community events to distribute our brochures and market our program. We will make presentations to established volunteer-driven groups and organizations, hang posters in places such as public libraries, and publicize our volunteer opportunities at senior apartment complexes, at meal sites and nutrition program events.

To retain our volunteers we will promote the benefits of membership in RSVP which include the

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opportunity to give back to their community, feel appreciated, a sense of belonging, supplemental liability insurance during volunteer hours, staff support, recognition events and mileage reimbursement. We will make every effort to target events and locations where our volunteers are gathering. Program staff will conduct volunteer surveys annually to encourage our volunteers to relay their quality of experience and to share stories and victories that may have experienced throughout their opportunity of volunteering.

To celebrate and recognize the services of our Franklin County RSVP volunteers we will contribute articles to local newspapers about their projects and accomplishments, we will mail periodic RSVP newsletters to each volunteer and station. In addition to our own annual volunteer recognition event, we will attend station recognition events, brunches, dinners and award presentations. RSVP will present awards, pins, certificates of appreciation, and special gifts to volunteers in honor of their services and contributions to the community. Program staff will phone/and or send cards to RSVP volunteers to extend birthday wishes on their special day.

We will offer appreciation to station coordinators and council members for leadership commitment to the new Franklin County RSVP with thank-you notes, emails, treats at advisory council meetings, and small tokens of appreciation. We will send a letter to the editor during National Volunteer Week thanking our volunteers. During Senior Corps Week, we will acknowledge volunteer accomplishments by publishing a list of volunteers who served 100 or more hours in the previous year.

Program Management

To insure management of volunteer stations in compliance with RSVP program regulations and preventing/and or identify prohibited activities, Franklin RSVP staff will examine and review emphasized areas outlined by the Corporation for National Service with all stations. Every station will sign a Memorandum of Understanding, defining the responsibilities of both parties and providing job descriptions for their volunteer activities which will be renewed on a rotating schedule. Each volunteer station will have a site specific volunteer coordinator that will oversee and monitor the volunteer's work ethic and monitor each volunteer's hours. RSVP staff will oversee all sites and make routine calls and site visits. ALL stations will receive a welcome packet which will include a RSVP Handbook, CNCS brochure and an RSVP poster to display.

We plan to minimize disruption of volunteer service through support and communication. We understand that the original Franklin County RSVP program was dissolved, for unknown reasons, and we plan on contacting appropriate agencies to let them know that we can still hold a place in their community, and clearly demonstrate the community need is still there. We will not only show them

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the activity will remain the same, we will show them how RSVP plans on growing and maturing into a bigger and broader outreach of community volunteer hours. If past volunteer station rejects our new program, we will seek out new stations that better fit with the changing Primary Focus Areas outlined by CNCS.

Catholic Charities has a strong effective and successful track record with Primary Focus area, and measuring performance. Catholic Charities is the host of two RSVPS' at the present time. One in Essex County, since 1972 and one in Clinton County since 1996. Each of these programs has been successful in the past, and now are in year one of their three year competitive grant renewal. Catholic Charities also host the Northern New York Foster Grandparent Program since 1999 with the same success level. Catholic Charities has supported, and stood by the many changes and have grown with CNCS of the years. We feel confident, and excited to broaden our agency with another CNCS program.

Our plan to ensure the RSVP in in compliance with the federal regulations, and that all volunteers are placed in stations that have the required Memorandum of Understanding (MOW) and to ensure that all volunteers that are recruited to server all eligible and to serve will be as follows. Catholic Charities, and the Diocesan Director, Sr. Donna Franklin will be in direct oversee of this program, offering expertise advising, and a sound background in the operation of CNCS programs. This program will also hire a full-time Project Direct to oversee the program and to directly insure all CNCS regulations are being met. The project will also recruit members from the community that reflect our elderly community, and the people that will be served. These people will be asked to serve on our local advisory committee that will act as an aide to the program director to support, lend advice, complete site evaluations, and fund raise for this new program.

Organizational Capability

Our plans and infrastructure to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight, day-to-day operational support and data collection are as follows. Catholic Charities has a well-defined set of policies and procedures guiding the financial management of the agency. Policies include: Personnel, Safe Environment for Minors and Vulnerable Adults, Domestic Violence and the Workplace, Procurement, Volunteers/Interns, Fiscal Procedures, authorizations for check, contracts and grants authorization. A centralized fiscal system will provide RSVP with fiscal support and oversight. An independent audit will be conducted on an annual basis. The Board of Trustees will review the financial statements four (4) times each year. Catholic Charities has policies for payroll and accounts payable. The agency has a procurement policy that requires a minimum of two quotes for purchases

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over \$1,000. Any purchases over \$5,000 require the authorization from the Board of Trustees. All vouchers and payroll time sheets require authorization by the Executive Director prior to payment. RSVP staff will be able to access fiscal reports as needed. The Fiscal Office utilizes a fund accounting system. Each grant and program will be maintained in a segregated account. The programs on the local level will be authorized to keep track of their revenue and expenses. RSVP will utilize EXCEL for this purpose.

Program staff and volunteers must review written Catholic Charities policy, undergo a background check and orientation. Staff will participate in training provided on federal, state and local levels. Funds will be allocated for webinars, consortium meetings and seminars, including the CNCS virtual conferences. We will provide orientation for new Advisory Council members outlining RSVP history, mission and vision, Corporation and sponsor's functions, and council responsibilities. The program director and financial office will conduct fiscal oversight on multiple levels, from self-oversight to review. A fiscal staff will be available Monday-Friday business hours to answer any question immediately either by email or phone calls. Franklin RSVP will obtain a subscription to Volunteer Reporter management database for our system of data collection. The project director will be in daily contact with all support staff.

Descriptions of clearly defined staff positions are as follows. Key Staff: Sr. Donna M. Franklin, LCSW is the Executive Director. Sister Donna is a licensed clinical social worker in New York State. She has 40 years of experience in the field of human services. Thirty of those years have been in supervisory and administrative positions. Her education includes: B.S. in sociology, an MSW in clinical social work and community organizing, and a certificate in Chemical Dependency Counseling. Sr. Donna has experience as a hospital board member and served for 17 years as President of the Board of St. Joseph's Nursing Home in Ogdensburg. She has an established record in the area of volunteer recruitment and training.

This RSVP program plans on hiring a full time Program Director, the job description for this position will be supplied by the CNCS and implemented by Catholic Charities Diocesan Director, Sr. Donna Franklin. We have already established the person that will fill this position, Melissa Howard of Tupper Lake, New York. Melissa is already employed by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, and is the current programs assistant for the Northern New York Foster Grandparent Program.

Melissa Howard, is a native of Tupper Lake, and has held the position of Program Assistant since June of 1999, when Catholic Charities was granted the FGP award. Melissa has worked side by side with the current FGP Program Director becoming an intricate part of the success of the Northern NY FGP.

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Melissa's dedication and respect of the elderly of her community will be an asset to the Franklin County RSVP. Melissa's previous experience includes office management, public relations, communications, daycare, and computer skills.

Each staff position has a detailed job description as defined by Catholic Charities. The Catholic Charities director oversees the maintenance, operation and policy of the organization and completes annual evaluations. The RSVP project director will oversee the program to assure that all policies are completed consistently. The Director coordinator will manage one office; coordinate its volunteers and data collection and report to the Diocesan Director on a regularly scheduled basis.

Internal policies and operating procedures will be provided by Catholic Charities and the Diocesan Fiscal Office, which is a contracted fiscal management agency; the arrangement is efficient and provides oversight and fraud prevention. The Chief Fiscal Officer is available to the Board of Trustees and provides them with regular reports on the agency's financial situation.

The RSVP Program Director will manage capital asset such as office space, office equipment, and all program supplies. This program plans on joining (in-kind) office space with its sister program, The Northern New York Foster Grandparent Program located currently in Tupper Lake, New York.

The existence of robust management systems and past experience managing federal grant funds: RSVP Governance follows Catholic Charities and is mandated to adhere to the privacy policies as determined in the HIPAA regulations. Catholic Charities has a privacy officer, Glenda Jones, LCSW-R. Payroll, accounts payable and other fiscal issues are centralized for all programs. All volunteers and staff are required to undergo a criminal record check and Child Abuse Registry check. Catholic Charities utilizes an annual employee evaluation. Program directors will receive an additional program focused questionnaire with three questions: Keep -- Build -- Stop. The program will be evaluated for impact, outcomes and relevance to current needs. Catholic Charities will require RSVP to submit an annual statistical report. This report will include: number of volunteers, number of volunteer hours, number of work sites, and number of persons served and program accomplishments. It is being adapted to retrieve a deeper level of program impact data. Catholic Charities has begun a new self-study process every 3 years. Surveys will be distributed to staff, clients, volunteers, funders and collaborators. Data will be compiled and an agency profile will be prepared for the Board of Trustees. Communication on a regular basis, with the various work sites, will provide relevant and updated data regarding level of satisfaction for both work site and volunteer. Many offices within Catholic Charities hold programs that receive federal/and or state funding.

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Catholic Charities main office has successfully held the Federal FEMA grant for many years. Each office is responsible for the management of these grants and ultimately reporting to the Catholic Charities director who is responsible for the financial management of the whole agency. Catholic Charities also contracts outside their office with the Diocesan Fiscal Office to maintain a double accountability of all Catholic Charities financial management. There is an excel tracking method for recording proper budget spending, in-kind donations, agency match and cash donations. This method is designed to complement the financial record-keeping procedures that Catholic Charities already has in place.

Other

not at this time

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

n/a