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Executive Summary

An estimated 200 RSVP volunteers will serve. Some of their activities will include providing companionship and transportation to adults with disabilities and seniors; tutoring K-12 students; providing food resources to the hungry; and training and managing volunteers. The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures. At the end of the three-year grant, 70 older adults, and adults with disabilities will receive companionship or transportation services; 60 of these clients will report that thanks to the service of RSVP volunteers, they have increased social ties and social support. In addition to these outcomes, over 2,000 individuals will receive emergency food from food banks and other organizations and 35 veterans will receive the transportation services they need. 40 students will complete tutoring programs and 60 volunteers will be recruited and trained. The CNCS federal investment of \$57,952 will be supplemented by \$ 24,764 of state and local funding.

Strengthening Communities

Thanks to over 40 years of operating in the community, first as a stand-alone RSVP program and since 1994 as a program of the Whatcom Volunteer Center (WVC), Whatcom RSVP is well-known for our ability to successfully engage and meet the needs of both volunteers and our community. During this time, Whatcom RSVP has continuously evolved to meet national and local needs. Since the implementation of the National Performance Measures with the 2010-2015 CNCS strategic plan, the RSVP Advisory Council, sponsor staff and board, and community stakeholders have come together to create meaningful organizational change. The narratives, workplans, and budget in this application demonstrate the action plan to accomplish our goal:

to strategically establish and strengthen partnerships in order to create high quality service activities which lead to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) National Performance Measures, increase the capacity of local volunteer stations to meet pressing community needs, and honor the 40 year history of RSVP Volunteers in our community.

About Whatcom County, Washington

Whatcom County, population 201,140 (2010 U.S. Census Bureau), is located in the northwest corner of Washington State and the continental United States. It borders British Columbia, Canada, to the north; Okanogan County to the east; Skagit County to the south; and shares water borders with San Juan County and the Gulf Islands, Canada, to the west. Whatcom County encompasses a total area

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of 2,504 square miles of which 384 square miles is water.

Bellingham, population 80,885 (2010 U.S. Census Bureau), is the largest city in the county (home to about 40% of the county's population) and acts as the county seat. Situated on Bellingham Bay, it boasts an active waterfront that supports fishing, shipping and marina operations, and a ferry terminal that serves as the southern terminus of the Alaska Marine Highway. Bellingham is also home to four institutions of higher learning, Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College and Northwest Indian College, with a combined annual enrollment of over 20,000 students.

Since 2000, Whatcom County has seen a 20.6% population growth. Since 2008, the 55 and older population has increased from 19.8% to 26.3% in the 2010 U.S. Census. Based on population density, Whatcom County is considered a rural county.

In the 2000's, the county's employment growth was strong, and during the recent economic downturn, Whatcom County has lost fewer jobs on a percentage basis than either the state or nation. This is partially due to the strength of the Canadian dollar and the prevalence of shoppers from B.C. patronizing Whatcom County retailers (Employment Security Department, Dec. 2010). The county also has a healthy farm economy that includes dairy, poultry, strawberry and raspberry production. In 2010, the median household income in Whatcom County was \$47,812 and the median family income was \$63,624 - 15% and 7% less, respectively, than those income categories for the state. In the county, about 7.7% of families and 15.4% of the total population were below the poverty line, including 8.3% of those aged 65 or over (2010 U.S. Census Bureau).

According to Guidestar.org, Whatcom County is also home to over 480 non-religious nonprofit organizations. This impressive 'third sector' exists hand-in-hand with a community-wide commitment to social engagement and service. According to the Volunteering in America report from the CNCS, 26.8% of Americans and 34.4% of Washingtonians volunteer. In a county-wide survey by the Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities, 64% of Whatcom County respondents report they volunteered at least once in 2001/2002. There is little doubt that the 40 year history of Whatcom RSVP and the Whatcom Volunteer Center have contributed to the spirit of volunteerism in Whatcom County.

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After careful consideration of the aforementioned goal, we have designated Healthy Futures as our primary focus area, specifically the Aging in Place and Obesity and Food Objectives. Not only do RSVP volunteers have a long history of serving in these areas, but there is an undeniable need in Whatcom County.

Supporting the Ability of Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities to Live Independently

Across the country, communities are facing an aging population and decrease in the number of potential caregivers. Washington State is not an exception. The 2010 Washington State Plan on Aging indicates that the annual increase in the number of people aged 65+ living in the state is expected to jump from 25,000 to 40,000. The Plan also acknowledges that as in all states, the aging of the baby boomer generation will greatly increase the numbers of Washingtonians needing assistance as they age, and many may lack the financial stability and caregiver support to receive the services they need. In Whatcom County, currently about 34,098 people 60 years and older reside here. This is 20% of the population, which is significantly higher than the 11% at the state level. 28.6% of Whatcom County residents 60 and older live alone, and 7.5% live below the federal poverty level (2010 U.S. Census). Additionally, the growth in the population needing care and smaller family size in the baby boom generation has combined to decrease the ratio of family caregivers available to those needing care. It is estimated that in 1990, there were eleven potential family caregivers for each person needing care and that by 2050, that ratio will be four to one (Washington State Plan on Aging). With this unprecedented growth in the senior population, decrease in family caregivers, and assuming that close to a third of the seniors will be living alone, volunteer-based programs that provide basic chore, transportation and companionship services will be critical to helping many remain living independently longer. Additionally, these programs also provide critical assistance to those individuals living alone with either short- or long term disabilities who are facing financial challenges and also lack a family caregiver.

In support of the objective Aging in Place, RSVP volunteers will serve with the Volunteer Chore Program to provide household upkeep, transportation, and other services that allow homebound older adults and individuals with disabilities to live independently. The Volunteer Chore Program has been in our community for over 20 years and is supported by the Northwest Regional Council, our area agency on aging as an important and cost effective program.

The RSVP Director and the Volunteer Chore Program Director have created an evaluation plan which

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will ensure the accurate reporting of the Healthy Future output (H8), the number of individuals served by RSVP Volunteers. The Volunteer Chore Program keeps detailed volunteer and client records. Each service is entered into a searchable database. Each quarter, the Volunteer Chore Program will report the cumulative number of unduplicated individuals served by RSVP volunteers during that RSVP grant cycle. These service activities will also lead to National Performance measure outcomes.

For several years, the Volunteer Chore program has partnered with a Western Washington University class to annually survey clients of this program. This survey is initially mailed to clients, and student volunteers follow up with phone calls if the survey is not returned. One of the survey questions has always been whether or not the volunteer assistance enables them to continue to live independently. The Volunteer Chore Program Director has agreed to add a survey question about increased social ties/social support, in alignment with the CNCS Healthy Futures outcome (H9). The RSVP Director has offered to help design the survey, which will be modeled after the 2013 Senior Corps Independent Living Survey. The survey results will be reported to the RSVP Director at the end of each grant year.

Assisting Individuals with Access to Food Resources:

In 2012, 14.5% of U.S. households were food insecure, meaning that at some point during the year, they lacked the resources to provide sufficient food for themselves and their families to live a healthy, active lifestyle (Household Food Security in the United States 2012, USDA Economic Research Service, September 2013). In Washington State, the rate of food insecure households is slightly higher, at 14.6% (2013 Hungry in Washington, Children's Alliance). According to this report, 40% of households below the poverty line experience food insecurity and Washington state rate of hunger (low or very low food security) exceed the neighboring states of Oregon and Idaho.

Whatcom County's median income in 2011 was \$50,978, below the Washington state median income level of \$57,742. Whatcom County's median income was also lower than all other peer counties, with Skagit County being the closest at \$54,965. The percentage of people in poverty in Whatcom County, at 15% in 2011, was the highest among peer counties and higher than the state percentage of 13% (Whatcom Futures Vision 2011-2012, Northwest Economic Council Whatcom County). In 2012, 16% of children in Whatcom County were in poverty, higher than 13% of children nationally (County Health Rankings and Roadmap Website, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of

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Wisconsin Population Health Institute, September 2013,

<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/washington/2012/whatcom/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot/by-rank>).

Many low-income individuals and families rely heavily on emergency food provided by Whatcom County food banks, meal programs and other nonprofits that distribute food resources.

The Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities, which includes The Opportunity Council, the local community action agency, and the United Way of Whatcom County, collaborated to present the Whatcom Prosperity Project. The goal of this project is to develop a report to inform local service providers, policy makers, and community members about the experiences of poverty in Whatcom County. The survey was conducted at 15 local agencies and included 660 respondents. Of those surveyed, 27% reported that someone in their household had gone hungry because they did not have enough food, 53% had skipped a meal, and 88% relied on some form of food assistance (<http://unitedwaywhatcom.org/media/WPP-PPT.pdf>). The good news is that while survey respondents rated food assistance to be of high importance, they also rated food assistance to be available in Whatcom County. The availability of food assistance in Whatcom County is possible thanks to the service of volunteers.

Organizations that distribute food rely on the service of volunteers. In Western Washington, over a third of food banks and meal programs have no paid staff and on average, 30 volunteers serve each week at food banks (Hunger in America 2010, Western Washington Findings). Many of the people that make up this volunteer work force at food banks, meal programs, and other social service agencies that distribute food resources in Whatcom County are RSVP volunteers.

Whatcom RSVP will continue to strategically partner with organizations that align with the National Performance Measure Objective, Obesity and Food. RSVP volunteers have a long history of supporting the local food banks and food programs, especially in the rural areas of Whatcom County. In fact, two of the Whatcom County food banks are managed by RSVP volunteers.

Whatcom County food banks have a detailed client tracking database in place to measure the number of people served. The RSVP volunteer stations will report the cumulative number of individuals receiving emergency food from food banks, food pantries, or other nonprofit organizations, in

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alignment with Healthy Futures output (H11). The RSVP Director has also offered assistance in future evaluation, which could include a collaborative survey to collect program outcomes.

Service to Veterans

Little information is available about the county's civilian veteran population but the 2010 U.S Census 5-Year Estimate indicates approximately 16,999 veterans live here, making up 11.2% of the population. The Whatcom County Health Department's Veterans Service Office estimates that there are closer to 18,000 veterans living in the county and expects this number to grow (Personal communication, Elizabeth Witowski, Veterans Specialist, Oct. 26, 2011).

In addition to these service activities in the main focus area, Whatcom RSVP volunteers will also offer transportation to veterans. The Veteran Transportation project is part of the Volunteer Chore program. This program was launched in 2012 in response to a pressing community need. There is no VA clinic or hospital in Whatcom County, and many veterans were not able to make it to their appointments. Using the same infrastructure to track RSVP Volunteers and client records, the Volunteer Chore Program will track and report the number of veterans served as an output in alignment with the National Performance Measures Output (V1). Additionally, Whatcom RSVP also recruits and tracks the number of veteran RSVP volunteers. In fact, over half of the Veteran Transportation volunteers are veterans themselves.

With the support of the RSVP Advisory Council and the sponsor, the RSVP Director has chosen Healthy Futures as the Primary Focus Area for Whatcom RSVP. This decision was made because historically, the greatest number of RSVP Volunteers has served in this Focus Area and we have a long history of strong partnerships with these volunteer stations. However, RSVP Volunteers will also serve in other focus areas and capacity building in order to diversify the choices of service activities and to meet other critical community needs, such as Disaster Services, Education, and Capacity Building.

Data Collection for National Performance Measures in Other Focus Areas and Capacity Building

Whatcom RSVP has a clear plan and strong infrastructure to ensure National Performance Measures data collection, measurement, and management. This plan includes 3 main strategies.

The first strategy is to establish and strengthen partnerships with organizations capable of data

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collection. The aforementioned partnerships with the Volunteer Chore Program and food banks are an excellent example of this. In addition to the service activities in the Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area, Whatcom RSVP is strengthening partnerships with other volunteer stations.

In the Education Focus Area, Whatcom RSVP will partner with the Boys and Girls Club of Whatcom County and Communities in School. Whatcom RSVP will recruit volunteers 55 and older to serve as tutors at these volunteer stations, at multiple sites throughout Whatcom County. Boys and Girls Club and Communities in Schools already implement best practices in program evaluation and have infrastructure to support data collection, measurement, and management. Whatcom RSVP will assist with targeted recruitment with the goal of recruiting more volunteers to serve more students and ultimately, to improve K-12 academic success in Whatcom County. At this time, Whatcom RSVP will report the number of K-12 students that complete participation in K-12 education programs (National Performance Measure Output ED2). During this 3 year grant period, Whatcom RSVP will also work with these volunteer stations to expand the evaluation plan to include National Performance Measure Outcomes. Americorps members serve at these volunteer stations as well, and we are confident we will be able to collaborate with other CNCS partners to strengthen the National Performance Measure Outcomes, without duplication.

The second strategy to ensure National Performance Measures data collection, measurement, and management is to create a partnership agreement which includes shared goals and an evaluation plan with each RSVP Volunteer Station. As we align with the CNCS Priority Measures, we are better able to create meaningful partnerships, fewer in number, yet of much higher quality. Whatcom RSVP maintains a strong infrastructure to manage RSVP volunteer hours, as this was the primary evaluation measure up until the implementation of National Performance Measures. Like many RSVP programs, Whatcom RSVP faced the challenge of collecting additional outputs and outcomes from volunteer stations, due to the size and scope of our program. Just 3 years ago, we had over 3 times the required number of RSVP volunteers (600 +), serving at over 100 volunteer stations. We did not have the necessary resources to collect and manage program outcomes from each of these volunteer stations. Now that Whatcom RSVP has carefully reduced the number of RSVP Volunteers and volunteer stations, we are establishing and strengthening partnerships. The RSVP Director communicates regularly with volunteer station supervisors which has fostered a true collaboration. These relationships are supported by a Partnership Agreement, which includes an evaluation plan for all RSVP service activities. This document is initially drafted and signed along with the Memorandum

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of Understanding and is revised as needed to support the evaluation process. This strategy also supports and informs the third strategy.

The third strategy is to collaborate with volunteer stations and other stakeholders to improve program evaluation and collect meaningful data. In addition to collecting National Performance Measurement data, Whatcom RSVP engages with community stakeholders to collect meaningful data to meet pressing community needs, such as high school dropout rates and rates of food insecurity.

Recruitment and Development

For over forty years, our organization has been central in recruiting volunteers to meet community needs. As a key program of Whatcom Volunteer Center, Whatcom RSVP has a well-defined plan and strong infrastructure to create well-developed, high quality RSVP volunteer assignments, which give RSVP volunteers the opportunity to improve their communities and themselves through service. Whatcom RSVP has four main strategies to accomplish this goal. The first of these strategies is to utilize a state-of-the-art online volunteer recruitment portal. As a key program of the Whatcom Volunteer Center (WVC), Whatcom RSVP has access this online portal for posting and searching volunteer opportunities in Whatcom County. In November of 2012, WVC switched to Get Connected. The RSVP Director offers personalized training to volunteer supervisors at volunteer stations in how to create high quality volunteer opportunities, draft accurate position descriptions, and post these opportunities to expand their recruitment reach. The system has many capabilities. Volunteers create an online profile, in which they specify their skills, abilities, availability, and interests. The volunteers can then search for opportunities that match the above specifications, become "fans" of favorite agencies, and receive notifications when new opportunities are posted. This system currently has over 2,000 users, and the membership is growing steadily.

The second strategy to develop high quality RSVP volunteer assignments is to develop strong strategic partnerships with volunteer stations whose missions align with the CNCS Performance measures and meet critical community needs. Since the RSVP Director has hired in the spring of 2012, she has performed site visits at over 35 volunteer stations. With the support and guidance of the RSVP Advisory Council and WVC's Executive Director, we have decreased the number of volunteer stations and thus, RSVP volunteers so that the focus will be on high quality service activities and strategic partnerships that align with CNCS performance measures and meet critical community needs. In addition to the Memorandum of Understanding, the RSVP Director and Volunteer Station Supervisor

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also co-create a Partnership Agreement, which outlines shared goals, activities each partner agree to do, and an evaluation plan. As a key program of WVC, Whatcom RSVP offers training and support in implementing best practices in volunteer program development, management and evaluation.

The third strategy is to involve RSVP Volunteers in the development of partnerships and service activities. RSVP Volunteers are directly involved in program planning, recruitment, outreach. Three of the RSVP Advisory Council members are RSVP Volunteers. Also, in 2012, Whatcom RSVP launched an RSVP Ambassador program. RSVP Ambassadors are RSVP Volunteers who assist Whatcom RSVP with the development of the outreach and recruitment plan, and represent Whatcom RSVP in the community. In addition to the direct involvement of RSVP Volunteers, Whatcom RSVP also surveys current and potential RSVP volunteers. For example, in the fall of 2012, a group of Western Washington University Students conducted a series of focus groups with volunteers 55 and older to evaluate their volunteer experiences and identify trends. These students were mentored by their professor, a professional communications expert with years of experience conducting focus groups. The students presented to the RSVP Advisory Council and WVC Board of Directors, and their findings have informed our recruitment, development, and retention plans. For example, one trend was the desire for more social interaction. In the Spring of 2013, the same professor assisted a group of students in planning a volunteer social dinner. These findings have also improved our recruitment strategies. 80% of the focus group participants found their volunteer opportunity through a posting in the local newspaper. We have increased the number of press releases and public service announcements that we send out, which has been a successful strategy.

Whatcom RSVP has a plan and infrastructure to ensure volunteers receive necessary training to be highly effective in addressing community needs. This includes training opportunities for RSVP volunteers, through the volunteer stations as well as supplemental trainings organized by the Whatcom Volunteer Center. In compliance with RSVP Federal Regulations, each of the volunteer stations provide initial orientation and training for RSVP volunteers. For example, the Boys and Girls Club of Whatcom County requires that each volunteer complete initial training which includes child safety and tutoring. The Volunteer Chore program initially orients volunteers and also offers quarterly trainings on various topics such as boundary setting, working with adults with disability, and the issues of aging.

Specifically for this three year grant cycle, Whatcom RSVP will collaborate with volunteer stations to offer additional trainings to all RSVP Volunteers. Whatcom RSVP has plans for the following trainings: disaster preparation, CPR/First Aid training, identifying child abuse, and how to create

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veteran friendly spaces. As training for volunteers is a key priority for Whatcom RSVP and the Whatcom Volunteer Center, RSVP Volunteers will likely have access to additional training opportunities.

Whatcom RSVP has a long history of commitment to inclusivity and has plans to support this. Whatcom County is less diverse than either the state or the nation. In 2010, 81.9% of the county was white, non-Hispanic compared to 72.5% of the state and 63.7% of the nation. The Lummi Nation and Nooksack tribe, and increasing populations of Asian-Americans, African Americans and Hispanic-Americans, make up about 14.6% of Whatcom County's total population (2010 U.S. Census Bureau). Based on population density, Whatcom County is considered a rural county.

Because of the strong relationships we have developed with a variety of partner agencies and the targeted outreach we conduct to encourage volunteerism by all groups in our community, both our agency and volunteers pools have a natural diversity that mirrors that of Whatcom County. Our position as an all-inclusive center has also led to relationship-building with entities including the YWCA, North Sound Center for Independence, and Lummi Nation.

In response to requests from volunteer stations, Whatcom RSVP has a plan for targeted recruitment in the more rural areas of Whatcom County, including areas where pockets of non-native English speakers reside.

Whatcom RSVP is committed to providing positive volunteer experiences and has a clear plan and infrastructure to retain and recognize RSVP volunteers. At the WVC and RSVP, we listen to and learn from both our prospective and active volunteers and partner agencies. We place great value on providing a high-quality experience for volunteers, and conscientiously work to match volunteers' goals with the current needs of partner agencies. During new volunteer orientations, we ask them about their goals and needs, and help them target which skills and talents they may like to use or obtain through volunteering. Volunteers are encouraged to interview with two or three agencies before making a commitment, and we provide on-going support in selecting future assignments. When volunteers express a desire to take on more responsibility with their service, we work with partner agencies to make such volunteer leadership opportunities available. WVC and RSVP are committed to supporting solid matches and helping our partner agencies build strong volunteer programs because our experience suggests that these two factors are key contributors to high

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retention rates. Whatcom RSVP has also committed to providing more social engagements such as coffee hours and recognition events to increase retention rates.

Volunteer recognition is one of our core values and it is integrated into all we do. When working with partner agencies, we often discuss the value of finding lots of ways to say 'thank you' to volunteers. Many of our partner agencies provide recognition programs and events for their own volunteers, and the RSVP Director and RSVP Ambassadors attend these events whenever possible. To supplement the volunteer station's efforts, the Whatcom Volunteer Center also coordinates "Volunteers with Heart" an ongoing volunteer recognition program. Nominations are submitted online and reviewed quarterly by a recognition committee. Selected volunteers are featured on our website, in an e-newsletter, and given a recognition gift, donated by a local business. This recognition program not only recognizes volunteers on an individual level, but also contributes to community support of volunteerism, in recognition that volunteers create a healthy vibrant community.

Program Management

Whatcom RSVP has plans and infrastructure in place to ensure management of volunteer stations in compliance with RSVP program regulations. The key to accomplishing this is to set clear expectations upfront and to maintain strong partnerships with volunteer station supervisors and volunteers.

Whatcom RSVP has clear policies and procedures to oversee compliance. Before becoming volunteer stations, an organization must provide proof of its non-profit, health, or government status and must sign a Memorandum of Understanding. The RSVP Director meets with the volunteer station supervisor, and often with the CEO or Executive Director, usually at the volunteer station. The RSVP Director orients the volunteer station supervisor to the contents of the Memorandum of Understanding, including what activities are prohibited due to RSVP program regulations. If the volunteer stations do not have clear position descriptions, the RSVP Director assists the volunteer supervisor in creating these. According to our policies and procedures, new volunteer stations must renew the Memorandum of Understanding after one year, and after the first year, at least every three years. The Memorandum of Understanding is signed by the station supervisor and the RSVP Director, kept on file at WVC, and the organization information and date signed is entered into the Volunteer Reporter Database. The RSVP Director runs quarterly reports as to which volunteer stations need to renew the Memorandum of Understanding in the following quarter, and she contacts the volunteer supervisor to schedule a site visit before the date lapses.

Whatcom RSVP also has set policies and procedures in place to ensure that volunteers are aware of

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prohibited activities and to ensure that volunteers are performing their assigned activities. RSVP volunteers fill out an enrollment form and are informed of what activities are prohibited as an RSVP volunteer.

In addition to having set policies and procedures to set clear expectations through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding and/or the volunteer enrollment form, the RSVP Director maintains ongoing communication with volunteer stations and volunteers, including regular site visits and social activities for volunteers. This relationship enables the RSVP Director to assess whether volunteer stations are in compliance, identify potential problems, and to encourage volunteer station supervisors to ask for guidance or resources as needed. During these site visits, the RSVP Director is able to verify that RSVP volunteers are performing their assigned service activities.

Through the RSVP Advisory Council, sponsor, and RSVP Project Staff, Whatcom RSVP collaborates with community partners including the United Way and community coalitions to assess community needs and identify how RSVP can best be a resource in our community. Whatcom Volunteer Center, the sponsor organization is respected and valued as a major player in our community. Whatcom RSVP project staff and volunteers regularly attend community coalition meetings.

As previously noted, over the past two years, Whatcom RSVP has decreased the number of RSVP volunteers and RSVP volunteer stations to align with National Performance Measurements and to increase the quality of our program. Whatcom RSVP has the advantage of being sponsored by the Whatcom Volunteer Center. Volunteer stations and volunteers "graduated" from RSVP can still access the Whatcom Volunteer Center's Volunteer Connection program, which serves volunteers of all ages and partner agencies with diverse missions. While this has strained the resources of the Volunteer Connection program, it has not adversely affected volunteers and volunteer stations that do not meet the criteria for the RSVP program.

The Whatcom Volunteer Center and Whatcom RSVP have a strong track record in managing volunteers in the Primary Focus Area as well as managing performance. One of our key partner organizations, The Volunteer Chore Program, is a program of the Whatcom Volunteer Center. The mission of this program, to provide volunteers to help the elderly (60 and over) and adults with functional disabilities remain independent in their own homes, aligns directly with Aging in Place performance measures. This program has a strong infrastructure to track and report program outcomes to funders, such as the local United Way and Area Agency on Aging. Additionally, Whatcom RSVP has tracked and reported required outcomes to CNCS throughout our history. We also assist volunteer stations with implementing evaluation tools, such as systems to track volunteer

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hours.

Whatcom RSVP has the plan and infrastructure necessary to ensure the project is in compliance with RSVP federal regulations, including ensuring community participation through the RSVP Advisory Council. There is no doubt that the Whatcom RSVP Project is well supported in maintaining a strong and compliant project. The RSVP Advisory Council currently has 8 members, including a liaison from the Whatcom Volunteer Center Board of Directors. The Advisory Council meets at least 6 times a year in entirety and in committees as needed. The Advisory Council membership is diverse, knowledgeable about community needs and volunteerism and helps the Whatcom Volunteer Center meet program responsibilities. The current membership includes three RSVP Volunteers, two volunteer station supervisors, the President of a local civic organization, the Whatcom County Emergency Management Volunteer Coordinator, and the past president of the retired teachers association of Washington. The Advisory Council, Board of Directors Policy and Procedure Committee, and sponsor Executive Director, support the RSVP Director in ensuring project compliance. The policy and procedure manual is updated at least annually, most recently at the end of 2012. The RSVP Director presents regularly at Board of Director meetings, most recently on the subject of implementing National Performance Measures.

Organizational Capability

This organization has managed federal funds for the RSVP Program continuously since 1972. Our organizational financial systems follow all standard accounting practices for nonprofits and are recorded and tracked using QuickBooks accounting software. Both internal and external checks and balances are in place, including an annual financial review by a local certified public accountant. We maintain standardized accounting practices with written policies and procedures that include guidance for all purchase activities. The Board of Directors and Executive Director are supportive in revising organization policies and procedures to adapt to changes in RSVP Program Regulations. For example, the Board of Director's Permanent Policies and Procedures committee worked with the RSVP Director in the fall of 2012 to revise the personnel policies and procedures to be compliant with the National Criminal Background Check. We also have well-defined written job descriptions for all our staff, both paid and volunteer.

The Whatcom Volunteer Center employs a small but talented staff, with clearly defined job descriptions to support the accomplishment of RSVP program objectives. The Whatcom Volunteer Center currently employs 6 staff members, the equivalent of 5.4 full-time employees. Each staff

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member is reviewed annually at which time, the Executive Director and program staff revise the current job description as needed. While all of the Whatcom Volunteer Center staff work together to enhance volunteerism in Whatcom County, there are currently 3 staff members that dedicate all or a portion of their time to the RSVP program.

The RSVP Director, Hollie Moe, is full-time with almost 100% time spent on the RSVP program, in compliance with RSVP program regulations. This position oversees the RSVP program including, program development, volunteer recruitment, and ensuring compliance with federal regulations. Hollie Moe joined the staff in 2012. She has a B.A. in Liberal Arts from the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire. Before moving to Washington in 2011, she served as the Executive Director and sole administrative staff person for a small nonprofit organization. She has experience with organization management, including volunteer management and grant management and is an AmeriCorps alumna, serving with City Year Boston 2003.

The Executive Director, Angela Murray, meets regularly with the RSVP Director to supervise and support the program objectives. Additionally, the Executive Director offers budget and fiscal oversight, in collaboration with a paid outside service provider at a respected accounting firm, Larson and Gross and the Board Finance Committee. Angela Murray was hired in the fall of 2012. She began her career as an educator and holds a B.A. in Education and M.S. in Political Science. Most recently, she managed two grant-funded programs, one for a local school district and one at Western Washington University.

The Administrative Office Manager, Susan Porter, supports the RSVP program in many ways including: managing data management system, managing accounts payable/accounts receivable, managing communications, ordering and maintaining supplies, and representing RSVP at outreach events in the community. Susan also supervises our administrative volunteers, who enter and manage the data using the Volunteer Reporter Database. Susan Porter has worked at the Whatcom Volunteer Center for over 13 years, which enables her to bring much insight about the history and evolution of Whatcom RSVP.

Other

n/a

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

Not applicable