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Executive Summary

Legal Applicant: Colbert County Alabama Commission

Proposed volunteers: 160

The Federal share of the budget is \$90,004.00 for a one year period, the non-federal share is \$42,014 which exceeds the required Matching Funds of 30%.

The CNCS Primary Focus Area for the RSVP program is Disaster Service. Seventy-six Volunteers will be sufficiently trained and tested in disaster preparedness, disaster response and disaster recovery to become eligible to participate as a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Member. The goal for this current three year grant cycle is to continue the training and readiness of the RSVP/CERT program and to expand the program by 20%.

With these specially trained volunteers we are assured that our county is prepared in the event of a disaster as these volunteers have demonstrated during the devastating tornados of April 27, 2011, Hurricane Katrina and Rita and other less severe storms that have impacted our community since 2002.

RSVP Volunteers will also assist with education, mentoring and tutoring our "at-risk" youth. We anticipate that approximately 450 at-risk youth will receive services with the aid of RSVP Volunteers during this 3 year grant cycle. We anticipate that the RSVP Volunteers will assist with transportation to medical facilities for 1,500 disabled Veterans over the three year grant cycle.

Strengthening Communities

Colbert County Alabama is situated in the Northwest part of Alabama, approximately twenty-five miles from the state line of Tennessee and bordering the State of Mississippi to the west. The Tennessee River separates Colbert County from Lauderdale County which borders the county due north.

Lawrence County borders to the east and Franklin County borders to the south. Information obtained from the 2010 census states that Colbert County has a population of 54,446 citizens and a land area of 594.53 square miles which averages 91.8 citizens per square mile. Approximately, over 16,500 of these citizens are over the age of fifty-five. Colbert County is made up of six incorporated cities with Muscle Shoals being the largest with a population of 13,032, Sheffield with a population of 9,127, Tuscumbia with 8,308, Cherokee with 1,167, Littleville with 1,036 and Leighton with 830 in population. There are six other communities in the County that are unincorporated.

Colbert County's racial makeup is 81% White, 16.4% Black or African American, 0.6% Native American, 0.24% Asian, and 1.5% from two or more races. 2.3% of the population was Hispanic or

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Latino of any race. The Colbert County RSVP Program has encouraged all races and ethnic groups to participate in the RSVP program which can be demonstrated by the diversity of membership in the RSVP program. The demographics for the Colbert County RSVP program are currently 65% White/Caucasian and 35% black/African American.

Colbert County RSVP was established in 2002 as a Homeland Security Grant, special education and training have been pivotal in the role RSVP/CERT volunteers have made in successful disaster response and recovery efforts. With further recruitment by RSVP staff members, CERT trainers and CERT members, new CERT Members will be recruited and trained to meet the specific requirements needed to adequately respond to any disaster.

Colbert County along with most of North Alabama faces several disaster threats as Colbert County is home to Wilson Dam and Wheeler Dam which provides most of the electrical power for the entire southeast United States, rail transportation is essential to Colbert County though it makes us vulnerable to millions of gallons of hazardous chemicals that are transported through the county regularly, however the most probable disaster that faces Colbert County and North Alabama is severe weather, mainly tornados and/or straight line winds. Colbert County and North Alabama is considered "Tornado Alley" with an average of 22 tornados per year which causes an average of 104 injuries and 7 deaths per year. Due to these statistics, Colbert County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and local first responders are dependent on volunteers that are trained and experienced in disaster preparedness and response to help meet this critical need. Colbert County is also designated by the Governor's Office for special needs sheltering, EMA states that well trained, well exercised and experienced disaster relief volunteers are vital to meeting the criteria from the Governors' Office for special needs sheltering. The Colbert County CERT/RSVP were the central agency for short term and long term temporary housing for Hurricane Katrina and Rita evacuees in 2005, this responsibility was ongoing until 2008. During the April 27, 2011 F5 Tornados that hit our area, CERT/RSVP Volunteers again were a main catalyst in disaster response and recovery to our first responders. Their service not only included assistance to the local responders but also to the FBI in forensic identification of dismembered fatalities. This training and disaster response continues to grow and improve as our program grows, thus sustaining the performance measures as set forth in the National Performance Measures.

Proper performance of the RSVP's disaster preparedness, response and recovery efforts are supported by CERT training attendance logs and the results of the participants' role in the CERT graduation exercise. CERT Trainers are responsible for recruitment, setting locations and scheduling the hours of

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the CERT Classes, maintaining attendance logs, grading participants in the final CERT exam and providing members with their CERT badges and certificates upon successful completion of the training course.

The Colbert County RSVP will participate in additional Focus Areas such as providing disaster training for Veterans, providing transportation for Disabled Veterans to the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Birmingham some 100 miles away. Without this service many Disabled Veterans would not receive the life sustaining medical care or life enhancing therapy needed. Approximately 900 disabled Veterans will be provided with transportation to receive medical attention and/or therapy.

Other Focus Areas include education, tutoring and mentoring "at-risk" youth with GED preparedness, truancy issues, anger management, preparing life skills and the importance of civil obedience. Healthy futures will address the needs of homebound citizens with quality and nourishing meals to be delivered by RSVP Volunteers. The Colbert County RSVP will direct efforts to Environmental Stewardship with recycling education and collection. Economic Opportunity will also be addressed with volunteers assisting habitat for humanity and with a special program designed to teach and mentor High School youth on the importance of education in preparing for occupational decisions and managing a household budget to insure economic stability for our future workforce.

The RSVP Volunteers have been instrumental in assisting the local Law Enforcement agencies, Fire Departments, the Northwest Alabama Regional Airport, The Emergency Management Agency and the Colbert County Court System to help free agency personnel to meet the more immediate responsibilities to the community and to expedite service to the public.

The RSVP Program along with the Colbert County Commission has reassessed the needs of the existing volunteer stations and accessed the needs of the community to develop strategies to help meet those needs. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by each Volunteer Agency and the Colbert County RSVP Program. This Memorandum defines the roll of the Volunteer Agency and the roll of the RSVP Program. The Colbert County Commission conducts an annual evaluation of the accomplishments and impact of the program. Thus assuring that all goals and objectives are met.

Recruitment and Development

The RSVP Director, the Volunteer Coordinator, the RSVP Advisory Council, the Colbert County Commission and the RSVP Volunteers have an ongoing commitment to seek out Colbert County Citizens who are fifty-five and older to volunteer and participate in the Colbert County RSVP program and the Colbert County C.E.R.T. (Community Emergency Response Team) Program. Recruitment opportunities are pursued at Civic Groups, Community Festivals, Community Trainings, and other

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Community Events. However, sharing their own positive experience with the RSVP program through "word of mouth" by the RSVP Volunteers has been the most consistent means of recruiting new volunteers. All Colbert County Seniors are encouraged to join and participate with the RSVP Program, regardless of disabilities, handicaps, ethnic group, income or educational background. The RSVP Staff work with potential and participating volunteer stations to ensure that all volunteer agencies are handicap accessible and considerate of any special needs that are required to accommodate the RSVP volunteers. Our RSVP Program has been very successful in recruiting minorities to develop a diverse program as reflected in the statistics of our volunteer membership; our enrollment of minorities is 35% in a rural county that has less than 19% minority population. The Colbert County RSVP has always been proactive in the recruitment of American Veterans, which make up 40% of our volunteer enrollment. Being a primary Homeland Security Grant, Veterans have been a top priority to our program due to their valuable skills and experience through their military service.

Colbert County's racial makeup is 81% White, 16.4% Black or African American, 0.6% Native American, 0.24% Asian and 0.89% from two or more races. 2.3% of the population is Hispanic or Latino. The Colbert County RSVP Program has encouraged all races and ethnic groups to participate in the RSVP program which can be demonstrated by the diversity of membership in the RSVP program. The demographics for the Colbert County RSVP program are currently 65% White/Caucasian and 35% black/African American.

In an effort to include more Hispanics, we have been meeting with Hispanic business owners and leaders to discuss conducting C.E.R.T. Classes. It is our goal to encourage their participation in our CERT classes for their employees; we are especially targeting Hispanic businesses. Having bi-lingual CERT members will help to ensure that in the event of a disaster, especially a tornado, we will have CERT members in place that can assist the County and area first responders with disaster victims that may have a language or cultural barrier.

The Colbert County RSVP has been very successful in recruiting baby-boomer volunteers who have utilized their professional skills to assist other volunteers and our volunteer stations with computer education and assistance. Our baby-boomer volunteers also assist with volunteer programs that involve more high tech knowledge and experience such as the GED training and tutoring, Yellow Dot program, Sex Offender Data Base, District Attorney's office and Court System and the CERT Trainer program. We will continue to reach out and recruit baby-boomer volunteers for these positions and to assist and encourage other RSVP Volunteers who are not as technologically savvy. These baby-boomer volunteers are using their skills to teach other volunteers computer skills, helping them to

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utilize the internet and email, along with photography and interactive social media. Volunteers are encouraged to become engaged with the internet and online services as well as computer programs. This opportunity gives them the chance to learn new skills and expand their knowledge which in turn enables them to continue to grow, stay mentally alert and improve their lifestyle.

RSVP Staff members work with each Volunteer Station to ensure that proper training and education is provided to the volunteers for the specific tasks to be accomplished, along with supervision to complete duties requested. Community Emergency Response Classes are provided at no cost to the RSVP Volunteers and all volunteers are encouraged to participate in the course even if they do not intend to be an active CERT Member. Persons with handicaps are encouraged to become CERT members as there are many disaster response duties and services that are performed by handicap CERT members. Approximately 25% to 30% of current RSVP volunteers are serving their community with a handicap, special needs or limitations.

Our local law enforcement agencies, fire department and the Emergency Management Agency offer specialized classes to enhance volunteer job performance which includes but not limited to search and rescue, amateur radio, CERT classes, smoke detector installation and surveillance training.

Many RSVP Volunteers have very unique talent and skills, from photography, master gardeners, artists, map makers, electricians, welders and other exceptional talents. The RSVP Staff along with participating Volunteer Stations and Partnering agencies work continuously to incorporate these talents and skills into volunteer opportunities to help better our community and to inspire area youth in the arts, nature, occupational opportunities and skills that may not be taught in schools.

Retention of Volunteers to our program is just as important as recruitment. Our goal is to recognize and appreciate every volunteer in our program and to place each volunteer in a position that they find interesting and enjoyable, while also allowing them the opportunity to submit their special skills, talents and ideas in new or different programs. While situations in one's life may cause disruption of their volunteer service, we always have an open door to welcome them back should the opportunity arise that they can volunteer and serve their community again.

The RSVP Volunteers are recognized for their dedicated work and talents with a yearly recognition banquet that acknowledges each and every volunteer with a certificate and gift. Special awards are also given for the Volunteer of the Year, along with recognizing volunteers that we refer to as PNS Volunteers. PNS Volunteers are chosen by activities that the RSVP Staff, Volunteer Stations and Advisory Council feel are special performances of national significance. Our staff members remember those volunteers who are having health problems or who have lost a spouse or family member by

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visiting volunteers in the hospital, attending memorial services and wakes and sending cards of well wishes and sympathy. We also host social activities and educational trainings conducted by various entities such as the F.B.I., Law Enforcement, Emergency Agencies, and Forensic Identification among other agencies that keep volunteers engaged and active in their community.

Program Management

The Colbert County RSVP consist of one full time director and one full time volunteer coordinator who work together with the RSVP Advisory Council and the Sponsoring Agency, Colbert County Commission to ensure that participating volunteer stations are abiding within federal guidelines and in compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MU's) signed by the RSVP Director and the Volunteer station. The above mentioned entities also work together to identify other community needs and/or non-profit agencies that request assistance of volunteers and are in the legal guidelines of the Federal Regulations, as replacement of a paid employee by a volunteer is not allowable. Also inspection of the proposed volunteer station is conducted by the RSVP Director to ensure that the building and surrounding area is handicap accessible and meets the federal requirements of the American's with Disabilities Act.

Since the creation of the RSVP Program in Colbert County ten years ago, agencies are now contacting our office to obtain volunteers for their non-profit agency. I feel that this indicates the significance and impact that our program has made in our community due to the diligence of our staff and our RSVP Volunteers. When a new station is established, a meeting with the director or supervisor of the agency is arranged to discuss the needs, qualifications, fulfillment, education opportunities and the safety of the volunteer position. The position is discussed and an assessment is made as to the hours needed and the qualifications needed of the volunteer. The RSVP Program then enters in a Memorandum of Understanding (MU'S) with the new Volunteer station and a volunteer schedule is designed to meet the needs of the service to be provided. Volunteers are then recruited for these new positions either through current volunteers already enrolled in the RSVP program or we actively recruit new volunteers for these specific positions.

MU's are renewed every three years. Our volunteer computer software helps us to track and stay up to date on renewals of MU's. The director visits each station on a monthly basis to assess the station and/or volunteer's need or to see if any improvement can be made to our service. New volunteer stations are usually visited more frequently to guarantee proper public relations and to help ensure retention of all our volunteer stations.

Each volunteer station and each work plan is assessed with the development of a sufficient

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measurement tool/survey which is developed by the RSVP Director. Along with these measurement tools, the County Administrator, the Colbert County Commission and the Colbert County RSVP advisory council conducts an assessment of the quality of the program through information obtained from the volunteer stations and the volunteers themselves. The information is compiled and the County Administrator meets with the RSVP Director to address any concerns or changes that appear to be needed and also addresses the strong points of the program and search for ways that our strengths can be improved upon.

If it is deemed that a volunteer station is no longer meeting the needs of the community and is not significant to the National Performance programs as outlined by CNCS, volunteers will be offered the opportunity to transfer to another station where their service will have a greater impact on the community.

As our entire program has always been 100% impact-based work plans, measurement tools, time sheets and all other data are compiled in our "Volunteer Software" on our computer and hard copies of said documents are stored in secured cabinets.

The Colbert County RSVP Primary Focus Area is Disaster Services. Since the implementation of this grant in October 2002, all efforts and service has been in Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Response, Disaster Recovery and aiding law enforcement agencies and fire departments as we were established solely as a Homeland Security Grant. The development and training of a strong CERT program has been instrumental in the last eleven years in assistance with the sheltering and housing of the Hurricane Katrina and Rita evacuees, the ongoing recovery and service from the April 27, 2011 F5 tornadoes and our ongoing assistance with area police departments which has helped to deter crime and vandalism at area parks, festivals, community events and at utility stations and public water sites. Upon enrollment to the RSVP Program, Volunteers are given a volunteer handbook which explains the importance of timesheets, measurement tools/surveys, RSVP responsibilities, volunteer responsibilities, importance of confidentiality of each position and of each volunteer station, Volunteer code of ethics, RSVP staff code of ethics, insurance coverage and the causes for dismissal or termination of a volunteer from the program.

Our main financial resource is our federal dollars allocated by this federal grant. Our other means of support comes from money obtained from our Alabama State budget provided by our Alabama State legislators, TVA in lieu of tax dollar grants and through in-kind and monetary donations provided by our sponsor, the Colbert County Commission. Throughout the eleven years of this grant the Colbert County RSVP has continued to meet their 30% Community Match.

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Organizational Capability

The Colbert County RSVP Program is sponsored by the Colbert County Commission whose mission statement is:

Provide quality services as required by law or mandated by the public, to enhance the health, safety and general well-being of the citizens of Colbert County.

The Commissions guiding principles are

- Conduct county operations in a legal, ethical and fair manner.
- Conduct the public's business in a manner that is responsive, accessible and open to all.
- Provide professional leadership and operational excellence.
- Recognize that county employees and citizen volunteers are the foundation upon which these services are provided.
- Promote Industrial Development.

The Commission is made up of an elected six member governing body with a rotating Chairman. The duration of the chairmanship is eight months. Commissioners currently holding office at this time with terms expiring November 2016 are as follows:

District 1: Philip Rex Burluson

District 2: David Black

District 3: Dr. James Gardner

District 4: Emmitt Jimmar

District 5: Roger Creeekmore

District 6: Charles Hovater

The Administrative Personnel includes one County Administrator, Kathy Polk, who has over 30 years of County Government experience, one Chief Financial Officer with two accounting clerks. The accounting department is trained in federal and state financial regulations and guidelines. The CFO and the accounting department assist the county administrator in proper federal grant management to ensure that proper financial protocol is adhered to in check and balance practices. The RSVP program staff consists of a full time Program Director who has over 30 years' experience working with the senior population through ownership of Nursing Homes, Assisted Living facilities, and has eleven years' experience as the Colbert County RSVP Director as well as a certified human behaviorist who has assisted the Medical Field throughout the Southeast with staff and team building training and consulting, the director also has over 11 years' experience in disaster preparedness and disaster training. The RSVP Program is also staffed with a full time Volunteer Coordinator that has over 6

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years of experience as a volunteer coordinator and over 10 years experience working with seniors. Each of the above mentioned staff has a signed job description on file in the County Human Resource Department and each employee and staff member has signed and received a Colbert County Employee Handbook.

The County Commission provides a spacious office in the Colbert County Office Complex that is handicap accessible as instructed by the Americans' With Disability Act and provides an additional area of more than 800 square feet for storage which is adjacent to the RSVP office and is adequately secured in accordance with Federal guidelines for volunteer and staff files and supplies. The Colbert County Commission also provides all utilities, computer maintenance, service tech support, janitorial service and janitorial supplies, lawn and maintenance service, and provides all insurances needed to protect and sustain the RSVP Program and its volunteers.

With the fiscal oversight provided by the County CFO and staff, the financial and in-kind support of the Colbert County Commission and the County Administrator, the Colbert County RSVP has had the financial stability to build and grow a very successful volunteer program and will continue to develop and expand the program. This support along with the experience and capability of the RSVP Director and the Volunteer Coordinator ensures that the programmatic goals and objectives set forth in this grant application will be met and/or exceeded thus meeting the CNCS performance measures and the needs of the community.

The Colbert County Commission provides the space and accommodations needed to host the annual RSVP Volunteer Recognition Banquet. The Colbert County Commissioners and other elected officials assist in greeting the volunteers and handing out the Volunteer Certificates.

Purchasing and travel procedures have been put in place to assure that proper auditing is adhered to. When equipment or supplies need to be purchased, the RSVP staff submits a Purchase Requisition to the accounting department, the accounting department, with the approval of the CFO, then issues a purchase order which lists the item(s) and price(s) to be purchased. Upon submission of a purchase order, a check is then written to the business submitted on the purchase order, once the check is written it must be signed with two signatures. Authorized signatures for county checks include the County Administrator and the County Commissioners. Travel reimbursement is administered in much the same way, with the exception of a purchase requisition; a travel expense sheet with receipts is submitted. Every purchase or reimbursement must be validated with the proper paperwork and receipts. The Colbert County Commission has strict financial policies and procedures in place to ensure the proper implementation of all federal and non-federal grants. The State Department of Examiners

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audits the Colbert County Commission on an annual basis.

Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A