

Narratives

Executive Summary

An estimated 440 ADVOCAP Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) volunteers will address community needs in Fond du Lac, Green Lake and Winnebago Counties in East Central Wisconsin. The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures. Some of their activities will include packaging and delivering meals to individuals over age 65, providing companionship visits to individuals over age 65, serving at local food pantries and distributing information on health. Other activities will include tutoring children and building homes through Habitat for Humanity. At the end of the three-year grant, 364 individuals over age 65 who received at least 10 home delivered meals packaged or delivered by an RSVP volunteer will report having increased social ties/perceived social support. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) investment of \$179,954 will be supplemented by \$78,223 in non-federal resources for a total budget of \$258,177, exceeding the 30% match requirement.

Strengthening Communities

Community Description. ADVOCAP, a Wisconsin Community Action Agency, provides anti-poverty services in Winnebago, Fond du Lac and Green Lake Counties. Winnebago County has a population of 166,994. Oshkosh is the largest city with 66,083. There are also 4 other cities, 6 unincorporated communities and 16 townships. Fond du Lac County has a population of 101,633. Fond du Lac is the largest city with 43,021. There are also 3 other cities and 31 villages and townships. Green Lake County has a population of 19,051. The county is predominantly rural with 6 communities and 10 townships spread out over 380 square miles. The age breakdown for the three county area includes 25.3% being between the ages of 0-19; 30.4% between 20 and 44 years old, and 28.5% being between 45 and 64 years old. The minority population includes 6.1% non-Caucasian and 4.3% Hispanic in Fond du Lac County, 3.4% non-Caucasian and 3.9% Hispanic in Green Lake County and 7.9% non-Caucasian and 3.5% Hispanic in Winnebago County. (U.S. Census Bureau; 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010; 2010 Demographic Profile Data; (8 June 2013)

In Winnebago County, 11.1% of the people are living below the poverty level and 24.7% are living below 185% of the poverty level. In Fond du Lac County, 13.1% of the people are living below the poverty level and 23.9% are living below 185% of the poverty level. In Green Lake County, 10.7% of the people are living below the poverty level and 27.9% are living below 185% of the poverty level.

Narratives

According to the Wisconsin Food Security Project, the number of Food Share participants in our area has increased since 2001. In Winnebago County, the number of Food Share participants increased 12.6% from 2001 to 2012. In Fond du Lac County, the number of participants increased 11% and in Green Lake County, 12.5%. Poverty puts households at a higher risk for low food security and hunger than those who do not live in poverty. Very low food security may cause difficulties in both children and adults with physical and mental health as well as problems with behavior and social activities. The poverty level and the increased participation in Food Share demonstrates a need in our service area for individuals to receive assistance with accessing food both in an emergency and on an ongoing basis. ADVOCAP RSVP volunteers will distribute and transport food, help to locate pantry items and serve meals. They will also assist emergency food pantries by packaging and transporting food boxes. Because of the assistance provided by RSVP volunteers, individuals in our community will receive the support and services needed to help them access food. The service activities described will address the National Performance Measures under this project's Primary Focus Area: Healthy Futures: Obesity and Food.

Winnebago County is home to 22,336 individuals age 65 and over. Of these seniors, 7,011 are currently living alone. In Fond du Lac County, there are 15,225 older adults. 4,590 of these seniors are living alone. There are currently 3,652 seniors living in Green Lake County. Of these individuals, 1,092 are living alone. The proportion of people age 65 and older is higher in this region than that of the state as a whole. As people age, they face many significant life changes. They often experience health problems, financial problems, loneliness and isolation, reduced sense of purpose and the death of friends and family members. Due to the impact these changes have on the quality of life of older adults and the large number of seniors living in this area, there is a need for assistance to help local seniors live independently. To help address this need, ADVOCAP RSVP volunteers will provide companionship visits and deliver meals. Because of the assistance provided by RSVP volunteers, local seniors will be able to live independently and maintain or improve their quality of life. The service activities described will address the National Performance Measures under this project's Primary Focus Area: Healthy Futures: Aging in Place.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified a need to build awareness about preventative health services available to individuals 65 plus. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Enhancing Use of Clinical Preventive Services Among Older Adults; AARP, 2011)

Narratives

According to Fond du Lac County's 2011-2016 Community Health Assessment, only 49% of adults 65 plus reported receiving an influenza vaccination in the last year. Awareness of available programs was identified as a priority in the 2012 Green Lake County Community Health Assessment. The top priorities identified in the Oshkosh/Winnebago County Community Health Improvement Plan are healthy lifestyles; physical activity; obesity and type II diabetes; and healthy recreational opportunities. To inform older adults in our community, RSVP volunteers will distribute recommended and available health services information monthly in conjunction with congregate nutrition sites. Topics will include: vaccinations, screenings, counseling and more. Because of the information provided by RSVP volunteers, older adults in our community will receive information on important health topics and available health benefits programs. The service activities described will address the National Performance Measures under this project's Primary Focus Area: Healthy Futures: Access to Care.

Data Collection. To support data collection and ensure National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs are measured, collected and managed, we will complete an addendum in conjunction with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This addendum will outline the identified outcomes and outputs and describe in detail how the data is expected to be collected and submitted. The addendum also contains a written description of the tools that will be used to measure the impact. The addendum is completed by RSVP staff and the station supervisor to ensure that the expectations of each party are clear. Each station will receive a copy of the completed addendum for their records. Examples of data collection instruments include activity logs completed by volunteers and custom data bases designed and managed by partner stations. All stations and volunteers are entered into our volunteer management software, The Volunteer Reporter. This software allows us to track assignments, hours, needs, outputs and outcomes.

Veterans. ADVOCAP RSVP will serve veterans throughout all of our work plans. When needed, we will provide them with meal delivery or companionship services; assist them with accessing food on regular basis or in an emergency and inform them of recommended and available health preventative services in our area. We will work with the local Veterans Service Officer to identify veterans who could benefit from our services.

Recruitment and Development

In order to ensure volunteer, station, and client satisfaction, RSVP will develop high quality volunteer

Narratives

assignments, ensure proper training of volunteers, recruit a diverse volunteer pool and recognize our volunteers.

ADVOCAP will provide high quality assignments for volunteers by offering opportunities that will allow them to build new skills, share current skills, improve the community and improve themselves. We will also offer platforms for service reflection and provide ways to enhance their general quality of life. Some volunteer opportunities arise that are designed for those with a certain skill set. We will market these opportunities to volunteers as a way for them to build new skills and expand their knowledge base. We will encourage volunteers to be open to new experiences. RSVP offers small group gatherings as platforms for service reflection. Volunteers are encouraged to share stories and reflect on the impact they are having on the community. The RSVP Director also offers a "Why Volunteer?" presentation to partner agencies which includes allowing those who attend to speak on the benefits of volunteering. To enhance the lives of volunteers, we will work with our partner stations to ensure the volunteer assignments are rewarding and meaningful. This is done by creating unique volunteer assignments that will use the skills of a volunteer. A volunteer assignment description will be created for each position. It will explain the assignment, skills, abilities and interests necessary to perform the volunteer task successfully. It will also explain how the volunteer's work impacts the outcomes and clients. ADVOCAP RSVP also provides additional benefits like transportation reimbursement to, from and during the volunteers' assignment, and from recognition events. RSVP also provides supplemental accident and liability insurance through CIMA for each volunteer while they are volunteering. We offer meal reimbursement when appropriate. Volunteers will have a variety of high quality assignments to choose from with ADVOCAP RSVP because we will work closely with our partners to ensure that each position is rewarding and meaningful.

Volunteer training and technical assistance. Volunteers in the Primary Focus Area and other Focus Areas will be given a RSVP orientation by ADVOCAP staff using the welcome packet and will also be given a site-specific orientation by the supervisor. The welcome packet contains a RSVP volunteer handbook, which describes all the program's policies and procedures, an RSVP accomplishment brochure, top ten benefits for RSVP volunteers, staff contact information, ADVOCAP RSVP satisfaction guarantee, reasons why people should volunteer, time sheets, transportation reimbursement request forms, and frequently asked questions about RSVP. Each volunteer will receive a follow up call within 2 weeks of registration. This will ensure the volunteer understands the

Narratives

program and we can answer any question they may have. Each station has its own training process that is specific to the activities the volunteer will do and has a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which states they will provide on-site orientation and training for the volunteer when they start their assignment. We will then continue to monitor their satisfaction and progress through phone calls, emails, and site visits as needed.

Staff training and technical assistance. RSVP Staff will attend the annual Wisconsin Volunteer Coordinators Association Conference and participate in local trainings and webinars when possible. Staff will also participate in all ADVOCAP trainings.

Station supervisor training and technical assistance. The station supervisor will receive a copy of the MOU, RSVP handbook, tips for managing older volunteers, RSVP FAQ's, benefits of RSVP, and training on measuring impact. Stations will also receive a copy of the assignment description created by RSVP staff to approve within two weeks of registration. The RSVP Director will provide training to stations and volunteers on "Why Volunteer?" and "Recruiter Training" if requested.

Advisory Council training and technical assistance. The ADVOCAP RSVP Advisory Council will receive orientation on both station supervisor materials and volunteer materials. The Advisory Council will also be given an assignment description with details about how the Council does business. RSVP staff is always available by phone or email to assist stations, volunteers and Council members with any questions or concerns they may have.

Recruiting volunteers. To build a corps of volunteers, staff will conduct recruiting campaigns to encourage new volunteers to serve. We will write articles and press releases in newspapers, distribute fliers in local grocery stores, publicize on the radio, and promote volunteerism on local television stations. We will staff informational booths at conferences and fairs and display information in various locations throughout the community. Staff will give presentations to area agencies and use \$5 gift cards for a local restaurant as an incentive to learn about ADVOCAP RSVP. We will use church newsletters to advertise our events and recruit volunteers. We will also have several opportunities listed on VolunteerMatch.org and Americantowns.com. Using the Internet will be a large part of our attempts to recruit younger seniors. RSVP staff will also encourage current volunteers to spread the word about volunteerism and RSVP. Word of mouth is an extraordinarily easy way to increase

Narratives

volunteer numbers. Our goal for the next program year is to increase our recruitment efforts and collect data to evaluate the success of each effort. We will use this data to discover the best ways to use our recruiting resources.

Diverse recruitment. The term "diversity" refers to many demographic variables, including, race, religion, color, gender, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, age, education, geographic origin, and skill characteristics. ADVOCAP RSVP will strengthen our communities and bring together people of diverse backgrounds by actively targeting a diverse range of volunteers in our recruitment campaigns and developing promotional materials relevant to volunteers from diverse backgrounds. We will use recruitment strategies such as asking current male volunteers to personally invite other males to join, use the Internet to advertise opportunities emphasizing specific skills that are needed and the impact of the work when targeting baby boomers, and using minority media when advertising volunteer positions. We will make sure the registration and screening process is simple and offer a variety of ways to communicate with us. RSVP staff will also research articles and fact sheets about diversity that we will share with our partner stations.

Retaining volunteers. Building personal relationships is key to volunteer retention. RSVP staff will establish a relationship with a volunteer by talking with them in person or by phone. We will learn what motivates them and what their beliefs are. During orientation, we will explain RSVP by using the welcome packet. We have an interview guide prepared if needed, but just by listening we are often able to steer the volunteer toward a rewarding opportunity. We will contact the volunteer within two weeks of a new placement which enables us to address any minor issues that may occur and saves time if it's not going to be a good match. We will go through this process until both the volunteer and the site are satisfied.

Recognizing volunteers. Recognition is an important component of volunteer retention. When volunteers feel appreciated and important, they are more likely to feel connected to the program and continue their involvement. RSVP will provide regular recognition to our volunteers through events, gifts, awards and verbal thank yous. Recognition events will include: small group luncheons and breakfasts, an annual volunteer appreciation banquet in Winnebago County with entertainment and dinner, and annual recognition breakfasts in Fond du Lac and Green Lake Counties. We will also participate in and support recognition events at the Berlin Senior Center. We will use print media to

Narratives

recognize RSVP volunteers and each month we will send out anniversary cards to volunteers to recognize their years of service. We will also nominate RSVP volunteers for ADVOCAP's annual service awards.

Program Management

ADVOCAP RSVP uses data collected from community surveys and information gathered from local agencies to identify unmet needs. We then search out local agencies that currently have programs in place to meet the identified need or agencies that we could partner with to create a new program. We meet with a new station to discuss the partnership and expected goals.

ADVOCAP RSVP partners are chosen because they provide volunteer assignments that address the needs identified in the Focus Areas identified by the Corporation for National and Community Service. To ensure that each station is in compliance with RSVP program regulations and applicable laws we will have each partner sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU will be signed prior to the first placement and then updated every three years. The MOU certifies that the station is a non-profit agency or proprietary health organization in good standing. The MOU has a prohibition of discrimination provision and a statement of assurance that the station will provide adequate safety for RSVP volunteers. The MOU includes a description of prohibited activities and a statement of assurance that RSVP volunteers will not perform these activities. The MOU specifies the mutually-accepted expectations between ADVOCAP RSVP and the agency as we work together toward a common objective. Assignment descriptions are written and then approved by the station. Attached to the MOU is an addendum. If the partner is asked to assist us with measurements, we write the identified need, the service activities that volunteers will perform to meet that need, the expected outputs and/or outcomes, and the tools needed to collect the data on the addendum. If needed, we provide the necessary tools to the station supervisor at the beginning of the assignment. We then discuss volunteer recruitment strategies. We meet with stations as needed throughout the year as well as communicate through phone calls and emails.

ADVOCAP RSVP uses the Volunteer Reporter software to manage our information and data. This software manages volunteers, stations, placements, and hours. The RSVP Director is responsible for maintaining this database. The Volunteer Reporter software is able to track station MOU renewal dates so we are able to ensure that all stations have a current MOU on file. The Reporter also tracks all the volunteers. This allows us to ensure that all volunteers are eligible to serve in RSVP. We will

Narratives

also be able to ensure that RSVP volunteers are performing their assigned service activities by reviewing the time sheets or emails that the volunteers submit. Time sheets and emails include a written description of activities.

Graduating stations. Due to the changes made in our program design, some stations and their volunteer opportunities no longer align with the goals of RSVP. We will have to graduate these stations and offer the volunteers who serve there an opportunity to serve in a capacity that aligns with the new performance measures. Before the new grant year begins, we will contact all stations who do not fit within a performance measure and inform them of the changes. We will discuss the implications of the changes and work together to form a plan. If it is possible, we will offer to assist them in creating volunteer assignments that would fit into our new performance measures. If this is not possible, we will work with the station to find the best way to inform the volunteers of the changes. We will offer to call volunteers, write letters or host meetings. The volunteers can choose to remain serving at the station and also serve in another location that fits the new goals or they can remain serving and retire from RSVP. We will make sure that both the station and the volunteers are aware of their options.

Track record. For over 20 years, ADVOCAP has continuously proven it's ability to manage high quality national service projects. This includes programs that would fall into our Primary Focus Area, Healthy Futures. ADVOCAP, Inc began sponsoring the Winnebago County RSVP project in 1990. Since that time, the project has experienced tremendous growth. In 2002, ADVOCAP was awarded additional federal funding to increase it's capacity to recruit, manage, and train RSVP Volunteers in homeland security roles and to expand the program into Green Lake County. In 2010, ADVOCAP was again given expansion funding to provide RSVP services in Fond du Lac County. The agency also operates a Foster Grandparent Program in both Fond du Lac and Winnebago Counties. The Foster Grandparent Program is another Senior Corps Program administered by The Corporation for National and Community Service.

The Primary Focus for ADVOCAP RSVP is Healthy Futures. The goal of Healthy Futures is to meet health needs within our community including access to care, aging in place and addressing childhood obesity. ADVOCAP was created in Fond du Lac County in 1966 and has a long history of developing and implementing programs designed to address community needs. Because of this long history,

Narratives

ADVOCAP's experience in the proposed program areas of RSVP is quite extensive. ADVOCAP began to administer the Senior Nutrition program in 1973. ADVOCAP has also run the Title 5 Older Worker Program. Both of these programs are designed to assist seniors with education, health and nutrition, and in home care. In 1982 ADVOCAP began assisting households with emergency or supplemental food assistance. Today, ADVOCAP distributes over a million pounds of donated and federal commodity food to area food pantries and feeding programs. Youth programming is one of the many initiatives that ADVOCAP has supported throughout the years. In 1967 ADVOCAP initiated one of the first Head Start programs in Wisconsin. In 1969, ADVOCAP developed the Neighborhood Youth Corp, a program created to provide summer employment for teens. ADVOCAP also opened the first day care in the City of Fond du Lac, Kindercare. ADVOCAP administered a youth program designed to divert youth from the juvenile justice system and a Vista project called Project Read. ADVOCAP has extensive experience in community and economic development. They have developed and opened senior centers, assisted Oshkosh tornado victims in 1974, administered loans to low income families for housing and neighborhood rehabilitation, established Community Gardens to provide elderly and low income individuals to grow their own produce, supported the development of Bethany House, a homeless shelter in Fond du Lac, and assisted flood victims in 1993. Since most of ADVOCAP's funding comes from federal grants, many of the projects and programs are impact based. This includes: The Father & Family Stability Project, Head Start, Business Development, HUD Homeless Programs, Employment and Training Programs and Weatherization Programs. Impact based projects and programs require measuring outputs and outcomes, collecting and managing data and reporting results.

To assist us with program design, we rely on our RSVP Advisory Council. The Council consists of staff from partner agencies and RSVP Volunteers. The Council meets quarterly and has a chair and vice chair. The Council advises RSVP staff on program development and design, program evaluations and marketing strategies.

Assessments. To ensure our project is delivering high quality services and that our goals and objectives are being met, we administer several assessments and surveys. We have documentation of impact on specific groups of individuals and agencies through our work plans, volunteer surveys and station surveys. We combine the results of these evaluations to complete our annual assessment. The annual assessment of the RSVP project is used to adjust work plan goals. We will continue to use the

Narratives

assessment to research new or support current programs or projects in our community where RSVP volunteers can become involved and respond to community needs. RSVP has showed great success in reaching it's target performance measures. If a goal was not met, RSVP developed work plans, worked with the state Corporation staff, and made plans to implement new activities to be able to meet the targets. Each year, ADVOCAP staff and Board of Directors review all of the agency's programs and their outcomes. The agency has a detailed annual plan which includes outcome and impact measurements for all ADVOCAP activities. Progress results are reported bi-annually to the agency's Board of Directors and to other funding sources as needed.

Procedures for agency evaluation. The agency prepares an annual work plan which is adopted by the Board of Directors that identifies specific agency-wide outcomes to be achieved as described above. Department staff meet periodically to review and evaluate department programs as to meeting specific program and grant requirements. Management team meetings are held quarterly to review program progress and any changes needed with performance results reported to the board twice a year. An agency-wide custom data base tracks progress for all the performance goals. Each program has it's own tools to evaluate and gather data needed to report the progress of performance measurements.

Procedures for continuous improvement. ADVOCAP is committed to making the needed changes and program enhancements that arise based on the outcomes of the program impact assessments. To ensure programs address critical community needs, ADVOCAP conducts a community needs assessment every three years with the next assessment scheduled to be completed in 2013. With the results of the assessment and the input from investors and community partners, the Board of Directors develops a strategic plan to guide program activities. The strategic plan is the basis for the creation of the annual plan which sets performance measurements for each of ADVOCAP's programs.

RSVP Assessment Results. In 2012, an RSVP Station Evaluation was administered by RSVP staff. A survey was sent in the mail. We received a 68% response rate on this survey. Overall, 95% of the stations surveyed reported that because of using RSVP volunteers, they were able to sustain essential services in the face of decreasing resources. 85% felt they were able to increase or maintain the number of clients served. 83% felt they were able to increase or maintain the range of services they provided. Also, 85% felt that by utilizing RSVP volunteers they were able to increase the capacity to

Narratives

carry out their mission.

The majority of volunteers who responded to the 2012 ADVOCAP RSVP volunteer experience survey reported feeling an increased sense of accomplishment, feeling they made a positive difference in our community, an increase in the amount of pleasure gained from daily activities, better physical health, an increased sense of well being and an increased overall quality of life. 98% of the volunteers were satisfied with their RSVP experience. We asked for explanations for any dissatisfaction reported. We developed action sheets describing the identified dissatisfaction, the action we took and the result of our action. We continue to work on all issues that were identified.

Organizational Capability

Financial management systems and past experiencing managing federal grants. ADVOCAP's financial management system includes more than 150 contracts and \$12 million budget and is managed by our Finance Director, Tanya Marcoe, a Certified Public Accountant. Nearly 80% of these contracts are from federal sources. ADVOCAP uses a fully integrated, computerized accounting system which allows for separation of funding sources. Financial reports are prepared monthly and presented to the Board of Directors for review and approval. Each of the numerous internal controls ADVOCAP uses are reviewed and accepted by an outside auditor. ADVOCAP has always met required federal audit standards without deficiency.

Personnel and equipment management. ADVOCAP has assigned staff who are responsible for the upkeep of all ADVOCAP facilities and for procuring additional office space when needed. All equipment and many supplies are bought through ADVOCAP's office managers, who are responsible for securing the best price and arranging purchase. There are personnel policies in place to protect from unauthorized purchasing and purchasing that is not allowed. All purchases over \$500 must be approved by either the deputy or executive director. ADVOCAP has well defined policies and procedures set to ensure our project has adequate personnel management support. Our administrative policies and employee guidelines are documented in the written manuals: "Taking Care of ADVOCAP" and "ADVOCAP and You". These manuals include defined roles for staff and administrators as well as our mileage and travel policies. The Human Resources Department at ADVOCAP is responsible for all pre-employment screenings and paperwork, benefit administration, and all other personnel management tasks.

Narratives

Key staff positions. ADVOCAP is led by Mike Bonertz, Executive Director and Tony Beregszazi, Deputy Director; both of whom have over 35 years managerial experience with ADVOCAP. Mike Bonertz and Tony Beregszazi over see all agency operations including policy and program implementation. They also ensure that all programs are in compliance with grant requirements. Deb Tauer is the Director of ADVOCAP's Volunteer Services Department and Project Director for RSVP. The Volunteer Services Department includes RSVP and the Foster Grandparent Program. She has been an employee of ADVOCAP for eleven years, with six years experience as RSVP Director. With approval from CNCS, Deb's time is split between RSVP and Foster Grandparent Programs. 77% of her time is dedicated to RSVP. ADVOCAP RSVP presently employs 3 Volunteer Development Specialists. Sarah Culver has been with the RSVP program in Green Lake County for one month. She currently works 20 hours a week. 100% of her time is dedicated to RSVP. Sarah has a background in volunteering and working with elderly. Wendy Nevers is a full time employee who works in our Oshkosh office. She divides her time between RSVP and the Foster Grandparent Program. 75% of her time is dedicated to RSVP. Wendy has been an ADVOCAP employee for one year. Before coming to ADVOCAP, she was employed as a volunteer coordinator at a local non-profit agency in Oshkosh. Bridget Bestor works 28 hours a week in our Fond du Lac office. Before coming to ADVOCAP, Bridget spent 10 years volunteering in the local schools and managed the Children's Chorale in Fond du Lac. Bridget also divides her time between RSVP and the Foster Grandparent Program. 25% of her time is dedicated to RSVP. ADVOCAP has recently acquired 2 new programs. Senior Friends is a program that matches volunteers with local seniors who live independently for the purpose of improving their quality of life. Senior Friends will be part of our RSVP Healthy Futures Companionship work plan. A new half time Volunteer Development Specialist position has been created to assist with this program. This position has not yet been filled. A half time Administrative Assistant position has also been added to assist with the Winnebago County Transportation Program. The Transportation Program is part of the Community Priorities work plan. This position has not yet been filled.

Finance Director, Tanya Marcoe monitors spending for the project and submits the financial reports to The Corporation. Financial records are also audited by an independent CPA annually. There have been no negative findings. ADVOCAP employs a full time grant writer, Tom Ekvall, and a full time fund developer, Dana Knebel to help secure new funding. ADVOCAP also employs receptionists in each of our three offices and three financial support staff.

Narratives

Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A