

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

An estimated 350 RSVP volunteers will be recruited to serve throughout the County of Monroe.

The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures, with additional goals and objectives in Education and Disaster Services.

Some of their activities will include:

1. Assisting individuals who shop at the Food Pantry, especially older adults.
2. Assisting at the congregate meal sites, including registration, serving, and clean-up, and nutrition education.
3. Providing unbiased counseling with the Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program.
4. Assisting The Salvation Army with food and clothing distributions.
5. Driving individuals to doctors' offices, senior centers, and other appointments.
6. Assisting with registration at local health fairs.
7. Providing information about elder abuse prevention.
8. Assisting with early elementary programs with school readiness, nutrition, and physical activity information.
9. Assisting at risk youth with literacy and math skills.
10. Helping with capacity development at non-profit agencies.

At the end of the three-year grant, the following outcomes are expected to have been achieved:

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The CNCS Federal investment of \$88,942 will be supplemented by \$23,000 in non-federal resources.

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## Strengthening Communities

### Strengthening Communities

Monroe County, Michigan serves as the gateway to the Great Lakes State, and is on the western shore of Lake Erie. Monroe County is designated suburban, however, it is a predominantly rural county with a small town atmosphere. Monroe is rich in historical heritage -- we are home to the newly designated National Register of Historic Places War of 1812 River Raisin Battlefield.

Monroe has ethnic roots from all areas of the world, with French settlers being the first to lay claim. Eighty (80%) of the community's ancestry is European comprised of German (36%), Irish (15%), French (13%), Polish (9%), and Italian (7%).

There are 152,021 residents (2010 Census), of which, 36,029 are individuals under 18 years of age. The average family size is 2.59 -- down from 3.12 reported in 2005 American Community Survey, and poverty continues to be over 10%.

Persons under 5 years 8,665 5.7%

Persons under 18 years 36,029 23.7%

Persons 65 years and older 20,979 13.8%

Males 49.3%

Females 50.7%

White 95.1%

Black 2.3%

Asian .6%

American Indian .4%

Bi-Racial 1.6%

Hispanic / Latino Origin 3.1%

2005 2010

High School or Higher (age 25+) 86.5% 88.2%

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Median Family Income \$ 65,542 \$55,826

Percent below poverty line 13.2% 10.4%

Manufacturing, automotive, and agriculture (over 1,000 active farms) are the primary sources of employment. We are proud to be home to the La-Z-Boy Incorporated World Headquarters and Tenneco Automotive World Headquarters.

Additionally, the 2010 Census reflects:

- \* 20,392 (13.4%) are 65 years of age or older.
  - \* 34% of the older population live alone
  - \* 37% (7,533) of those over 65 in Monroe County reported having a disability, defined as difficulty with vision, hearing, cognition, ambulation, self-care, or independent living,
  - \* 57% of those with disabilities have ambulatory difficulties.
  - \* 8% had income below the poverty level and 18% had income below 150% of the poverty level.
  - \* Nearly 70% of older adults will spend the rest of their life in the place where they celebrated their 65th birthday -- which means more and more seniors are "aging in place" primarily in their own homes or apartments.
  - \* Older adults live on average 7 to 10 years beyond their ability to drive. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)
  - \* 31% do not participate in leisure time physical activities.
- As the Baby Boomers continue to turn 65 and people continue to live longer (85+), the new challenges will arise:
- \* More individuals between the ages of 60 and 65 are beginning to retire and are looking for meaningful volunteer opportunities.
  - \* Veterans and individuals with disabilities will continue to benefit from volunteer opportunities that utilize their talents and help to provide a sense of fulfillment in their lives.
  - \* The number of people who need in-home services, home-delivered meals, and transportation will continue to increase.
  - \* The number of individuals who are caring for a spouse or parent will continue to increase, resulting in an increase in the need for respite, socialization opportunities, and companionship.
  - \* The number of individuals who are isolated during a disaster will continue to increase.

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\* The increased numbers of older adults (expected to double by 2035) will put a significant strain on non-profit agencies trying to meet the increased demand with stagnant budgets. Thus, volunteer assistance will be able to help meet the increasing needs.

Strategic planning has been conducted by the Commission on Aging Service Agencies, and projected unmet needs have been identified as increasing needs for home care, homemaking, home chore, transportation, home delivered meals, and respite. This is based on the population projections, as well as on the experience of working with individuals. With budget cuts, agencies will look to utilizing volunteers to help meet the gaps.

Additionally, the Monroe Aging Consortium which is comprised of non-profit agencies as well as in home care providers and nursing homes have also expressed concerns that the need for services will exceed the funding available, and they have indicated that additional volunteers will be needed.

Healthy Futures Focus Area. In light of these challenges, this grant proposal focuses primarily on Healthy Futures goals and objectives that help to increase older adults' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life, increasing physical activity and access to nutritious food, and improve access to primary and preventative health care.

Volunteers will be recruited to provide home delivered meals, transportation to senior centers, doctors, and other activities; health education, assistance with access to food, and to provide companionship and other in-home services. Sign language interpreters will also be identified to assist with translation services at clinics and emergency rooms. These activities will directly relate to Measures H2, H7, H8, H9, H10, H12.

Senior center directors have reported that there is an increasing need for volunteers to help with the nutrition program. As individuals experience difficulties with mobility, volunteers are needed to assist with carrying trays and getting coffee. In addition, older adults who attend the meal programs are increasingly asking for health information regarding the meal content and calorie count. Volunteers will be recruited to help provide this information to the participants. Retired nutritionists will also be recruited to provide training to kitchen staff regarding the recommended daily allowances for older adults.

Volunteers will also be recruited to assist in the local food pantries in order to increase the number of

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individuals receiving supplemental food. Volunteers will also be recruited to teach how to utilize the food in healthy ways. During emergencies, volunteers will help to ensure access to food for those individuals identified as homebound.

Volunteer drivers will help to ensure that older adults and individuals with disabilities have improved access to primary and preventive health care and will report having increased social ties / perceived social support.

Disaster Services Focus Area. This grant proposal also includes volunteer opportunities in the Disaster Services Focus Area. Because of the rural nature of our community and number of individuals living alone, there is need for identifying those older adults who would need assistance in the event of a disaster and then providing services that are needed to meet basic human needs. Volunteers will be recruited to provide emergency preparedness education and short term recovery support.

Education Focus. The third focus area that will be addressed is Education. Volunteers will be recruited to assist with School Readiness, increased physical activity, reducing obesity, and with Succeeding in Kindergarten through 12th Grade. Through school Lunch Buddies, volunteers will help to meet the needs for improved social skills, as well as provide an opportunity to talk about nutrition and staying healthy through physical activity. Volunteers will also be recruited to work with youth at the Monroe County Youth Detention facility, Arthur Lesow Community Center, and alternative education programs to help improve their abilities with literacy and math.

Capacity Building. Volunteers will be recruited to assist with capacity building activities that help area non-profit organizations increase their effectiveness, as well as to implement three or more effective volunteer management practices. Information will be shared across agencies in creating policies and procedures so that new agencies do not have to recreate the wheel.

Tracking. The RSVP staff will develop written sponsor policies that defines and describes the system, identifies tools to be used, identifies allowable persons and authentication method, specified location of official records, and storage procedures.

The tracking methodology that will be utilized will identify the number of individuals who receive the minimum "dosage" of service determined at the outset of the activity. Veteran status will be identified and tracked. Pre and post tests will be utilized, along with satisfaction surveys, time sheet records (frequency of contacts and duration), participant records, and projected outcomes versus actual.

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## Recruitment and Development

### Recruitment and Development

The achievement of the Healthy Futures activities will result from partnerships with the five local senior centers in Monroe County, as well as the congregate and home delivered meal sites, food pantries, and schools. These agencies have identified individuals who are 65 and older who live independently in the community who are in need of this support. Volunteer assignments will be created that impact critical human and social needs.

Partnerships with area schools, especially those in economically disadvantaged areas, will be further developed to help children gain skills needed for school readiness and school success. Additional partnerships will be enhanced with Big Brothers Big Sisters, Arthur Lesow Community Center, Monroe County Youth Center, Orchard Alternative Education, and Head Start.

Through the Monroe Center's involvement on the Human Services Collaborative Network for the past 18 years, the United Way Directors Association, the Monroe Aging Consortium, and other committees in the community, the relationships are already established and needs have been identified that will lend nicely to the development of volunteer positions and recruitment of individuals to fill those positions.

The American Red Cross has identified the need for volunteers to provide emergency preparedness training, and the emergency response team recognizes the gap regarding the identification of older adults who would be in need of services in the event of a disaster. The American Red Cross is committed to meeting these needs through the use of volunteers.

Volunteers will be recruited through presentations and one-on-one discussions with individuals in church and civic groups, senior center members, Veteran groups, and retiree groups. Needed skills will be identified, and individuals will be matched according to their skills and interest. Additionally, the Monroe Center has a website ([www.monroectr.org](http://www.monroectr.org)) and a Facebook page. These two avenues will be used to post volunteer opportunities and procedures. Volunteer opportunities will also be provided to the Monroe Evening News, Dundee Independent, and Bedford Now newspapers for including with their community news. The local Monroe MPACT (cable television station),

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MonroeCountyRadio.com , and My98.3 radio will also be asked to highlight volunteer positions that are available.

For all volunteer areas, the benefits of becoming an RSVP volunteer will be explained, along with how the volunteer would be meeting an unmet community need. As volunteers are recruited, they will be asked to complete a Volunteer Application, agree to a criminal background check, and provide proof of automobile insurance. An initial orientation will be provided that includes an overview of the aging process, a review of available services, respecting diversity and confidentiality, and overall structure of RSVP -- recording of hours, time sheet submission, etc. Training will occur across all Primary Focus Areas, Other Focus Areas, and Capacity Building.

In addition to orientation, volunteers will receive on-going training (both on-the-job by the Station Supervisors, through site visits by RSVP staff, and in group settings). RSVP staff will visit all stations at least quarterly, but more often as needed.

Volunteers will be recognized through publicity in the Monroe Center's monthly newsletter , as well as in an RSVP newsletter sent to volunteer stations and registered volunteers, as well as to other agencies for inclusion in their newsletter. Volunteer impact will also be highlighted on the Center's website and on Facebook. Volunteers will also be recognized during an annual recognition dinner that will honor top volunteers based on hours and community impact.

News releases will also be shared with the local media so that volunteers are regularly recognized for their work. The Monroe Center has an established relationship with the MONROE EVENING NEWS and other local media.

### **Program Management**

#### Program Management

The monitoring process for all of the volunteer stations begins with the creation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the volunteer station and RSVP. The Memorandum of Understanding, negotiated prior to placing volunteers, will describe the program requirements, working relationship, and mutual responsibilities. Memoranda of Understanding will be developed for all volunteer work stations following the outline provided in the RSVP Lead with Experience Operations Handbook and in 45 CFR 25553.23(c)(2). All volunteer stations will understand that they are responsible for day-to-day supervision of the volunteers, reporting requirements, and provisions for safety. All stations

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will provide assurance of non-discrimination and provision for reasonable accommodations. Volunteer stations will also understand the criteria for volunteers to be eligible to serve in RSVP.

Job descriptions for each volunteer position at each site will also be developed. These descriptions will be reviewed by the station's host staff and with the volunteer recruited to fill the position. The job description will clearly identify the tasks that are allowable activities. The orientation will also include a review of tasks that are not allowable under RSVP guidelines.

Volunteer stations will be monitored by the RSVP Director and South County Recruiter (Coordinator) through, at minimum, quarterly visits and through review of the monthly time sheets turned in from each site. The time sheets are completed by the volunteers -- listing hours work, in what position, and what task was completed.

During the quarterly visits, the RSVP staff will meet with the stations' host staff to discuss their needs and to evolve or transform volunteer positions to adjust to changing needs. The RSVP Director and Monroe Center Director will also regularly discuss volunteer needs at community committee meets to ensure that the RSVP program grows with the community.

The Monroe Senior Citizens Center is in its 54th year of service to the community. We are accredited through the National Council on Aging / National Institute of Senior Centers, which means that we meet the highest quality standards. The Center has a strategic plan and an accompanying action plan that is updated annually to include new or continuing goals and objectives. The Center also has a monitoring system in place to measure both quantitative and qualitative impact of the services that are provided. The Center's mission is to improve the quality of life for older adults in our community.

The Center is open 365 days per year. A main reason for this is to meet the socialization needs of older adults -- enhancing individuals overall wellbeing and supporting individuals with aging in place and having access to services. A major service is the meal program. The Center serves breakfast six days per week and a noon meal (11:00 to 12:30) seven days per week. The meal is affordable and nutritiously balanced. Meals are cooked from scratch and are designed to take into consideration sodium and other nutritional guidelines of older adults.

The Monroe Center administers an annual survey to its customers. In 2013, 86.2% of the respondents reported that their lives significantly improved or improved as a result of receiving services. 76.8% reported that their quality of life is great or good, and 65.3% reported that a high

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quality overall well-being. This data is used in evaluating our services and making any identified improvements. For example, 56.8% of our customers report incomes below \$25,000 per year and 95.8% report that our fees are a fair amount. Only 1% said that they were a little less than I can afford. This data suggests that we maintain our fee structure as is, even though the cost of raw food and other expenses have increased.

In addition to monitoring customer satisfaction, we also track units of service. We have experienced a 39% increase in activity units since 2009, and our noon meal attendance increased 15% between 2011 and 2012. The results of our survey and tracking are included in our annual report, reported to our membership, and reviewed by our Auxiliary Council.

This experience in tracking and monitoring will be brought forth into the RSVP program so that progress can be tracked, monitored, and report.

The Monroe Center will establish an Advisory Council for the RSVP that will include representatives from volunteer stations, community stakeholders, and volunteers. Proposed representatives include:

- \* Director of the Frenchtown Senior Center
- \* Director of the Bedford Senior Center
- \* Director of the Monroe County Opportunity Program  
(community action agency)
- \* Director of the American Red Cross
- \* Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters
- \* Director of Arthur Lesow Community Center
- \* Older Volunteers (6)
- \* Elected Officials (2)
- \* Civic Organization representative

The Council will have written Bylaws that outline its responsibilities that will include review of statistical data, discussion of community needs, and budget review. An orientation will be provided to the Advisory Council of the RSVP federal regulations so that they are aware of the requirements. The orientation will also include a review of the Work Plan so that they are knowledgeable about the volunteer positions and tasks.

### Organizational Capability

Organizational Capability

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The Monroe Center assures sound programmatic and fiscal oversight and day-to-day operational support to ensure compliance with RSVP program requirements and to ensure accountability and efficient and effective use of available resources.

The Monroe Center has a 15-member Board of Directors that meets monthly (10 months per year). The Board's Finance Committee also meets monthly (12 months per year) to review the monthly finance report, including revenue, expenditures, budget, and year-to-date budget. All expenditures over \$500 must have Board approval. Two bids are required for purchases of \$1,000 or great. These guidelines are included in the Financial Procedures Manual that outlines policies and procedures for the financial operation of the agency.

The Executive Director of the Monroe Center has 35 years of experience supervising and directing staff, programming development, and budget development and management. The Executive Director also has experience with Federal funding and currently is the Project Director for the Drug Free Communities grant awarded to the United Way of Monroe County through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The Monroe Center's Executive Director, as Project Director for the DFC grant, has been responsible for requesting funds through the Payment Management System and for submitting quarterly and annual reports for the past five years.

Additionally, the Monroe Center's Executive Director has a Master's degree in organizational leadership from Lourdes University (Sylvania, Ohio) and a Bachelor of Science degree in Gerontology from the University of Toledo (Ohio). Having 20 experience working with older adults (and being a Baby Boomer herself), the Monroe Center's Executive Director has a keen perspective on the needs of older adults, volunteer development, and need for involvement and sense of purpose. Additionally, the Director has lived nearly all of her life in Monroe and is well connected to agencies, services, business and civic community, and its people.

The Monroe Center Operations Manager will have direct oversight of the RSVP Director. The Operations Manager has ten years' experience at the Monroe Center and currently oversees the internal volunteer component. Internally, the Monroe Center has a Volunteer Manual outlining how the volunteer program works. Volunteer job descriptions are also created for the Center's

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volunteer position. Training is provided in group settings, as well as one-on-one. And the Center recognizes volunteers at least annually through the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. These practices will be utilized with the RSVP program.

The Monroe Center has an annual independent audit of its finances. The audits have been clear of any findings or disallowed costs. And, the Center has had a fund balance at the end of the year for the past three years. The independent audit presents the audit to the Board of Directors.

Checks and balances are assured through policies and procedures that require two verifications of daily tills and bank deposits, as well as the securing of multiple bids for purchases of \$1,000 or more, and having two signatures on all checks. The Monroe Center's Accounting Clerk provides oversight of the revenues and expenses and provides regular reporting to both agency staff and the Board of Directors. The Monroe Center also uses an independent accounting firm for its monthly reports, check book reconciliation, quarterly reports, 990, and other documents.

The Monroe Center is housed within a senior housing complex (Mable Kehres Apartments). It is a 10,000 square foot facility and has available office space to house the RSVP program. The Center is barrier free, has available parking (including valet service), and is on the direct route for the County's public transportation system, Lake Erie Transit. The Center is open 365 days per year and thus provides a convenient place for volunteers to drop off their monthly timesheets, as well as to register and obtain information about volunteer opportunities.

Our agreement for rent and utilities with the management company (Forest City) is for \$1 per year, stemming from an agreement with the local Township, MSHDA, HUD, and the developer when the building was built in 1978. The original agreement was for 40 years (through 2018). The agreement was amended this year (2013) to extend the agreement and original terms for an additional 30 years (to 2048). As a result, overhead for rent and utilities is included in the budget as in-kind contribution.

This is an added benefit to the Monroe Center's ability to be cost effective.

The Monroe Center also has equipment -- computers, copiers, fax machine, telephone, and video projector -- that are available for the RSVP program. This equipment is well maintained and will provide the tools needed by the RSVP program for tracking, reporting, and training.

## **Other**

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N/A

### **PNS Amendment (if applicable)**

Not applicable.