

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

The Heart of Texas (H.O.T.) RSVP has been sponsored by McLennan Community College (MCC) in Waco, Texas for almost 25 years. They serve the six Texas counties of McLennan, Falls, Bosque, Hill, Freestone and Limestone (TX-12). The college engages and strengthens its community through strong programs, sustainability efforts, best practices, community service, cultural opportunities and integrity.

MCC is requesting \$71,865 to support 444 unduplicated volunteers in the H.O.T. region. Approximately 93% of these volunteers will serve in national focus area sites. 71% will perform in the "Primary Focus Area" of Healthy Futures and 22% will be placed in "Other Focus Areas."

The H.O.T. RSVP goal is to focus on seven diverse categories of community needs. These include the primary areas of (H8) "Aging in Place," addressing delivery of meals to homebound frail and elderly and (H10) Obesity and Food, addressed through volunteer support in regional food pantries.

In the "Other Focus Areas," we will address (V3) Veterans and Military Families through mentorship and service learning, (G3-3.3) Capacity Building by managing volunteers and (O1) Economic Opportunity by addressing employment, housing and financial literacy.

In the area of (SC1) "Community Priorities," RSVP will manage 7% of their volunteers in such programs as Hospice, Education and Ombudsman services. RSVP plans to report 100% of its volunteers serving in "Primary" or "Other Focus Areas" by 2017. MCC has a long history of strong management, fiscal responsibility, measurable impact and visionary thinking. Without a single federal finding during monitoring in 20+ years, MCC was recently awarded two CNCS augmentation grants to assist transitioning Veterans (May 2012) and to bring volunteer and disaster management services to West, Texas, following the explosion that leveled most of the town. (May 2013).

## Strengthening Communities

Strengthening Communities

Our Community

The Heart of Texas, a six-county region that includes McLennan, Bosque, Falls, Hill, Freestone and Limestone counties, has 352,657 residents and almost 53,000 senior adults (2012 U.S. Census). As the Census Bureau reports, 14.7% of the population is over the age of 65, a percentage higher than both the state (13.7%) and national (10.9%) averages. Due to frailty and other risk factors, almost 2,000 of these seniors have been referred by physicians to the Area Agency on Aging to receive the home-delivered meals they need to continue living independently (Heart of Texas Council of Governments

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Area Agency on Aging). The region's large senior population demands a high rate of aging-related needs, and the difficult geography of Texas only augments the needs of the aging community. The U.S. Census reports that more than 3.6 million Texans live in rural populations, making the state the largest rural area in the country (Susan Combs, State Comptroller). Of the six counties we serve, only McLennan County is considered urbanized, as it holds our only metro city, Waco. The main employers for the county are health care, schools and manufacturing jobs, but outside of Waco, the primarily rural region is supported by agriculture. Simply put, our area houses a high rate of older and isolated seniors who need assistance.

The high poverty levels in our region only compound these issues. Exceeding both the 17.0% state average and 16.0% national average, 18.5% of the residents in our region live in poverty (2012 U.S. Census). In McLennan County alone, our largest hub and only metropolitan county, more than 1 in 4 residents (28.7%) live in poverty, according to Waco City Council's Poverty Solutions Task Force. The Poverty Solutions Task Force combines the efforts of local service agencies and studies our region's specific needs. These include the Equal Opportunity Advancement Corporation (EOAC- the regional community action agency), the United Way Emergency Food and Shelter Action Program, the Heart of Texas Area Agency on Aging, the Heart of Texas Council of Governments, and McLennan Community College (MCC). With this comprehensive data collection, the Task Force has created long-term strategies to combat our community's high levels of poverty. It targets three critical areas that our communities must support in order to curb the high poverty rates. These include:

- 1) Fortify health for all citizens through intervention, education and community resources.
- 2) Promote self-sufficiency by providing resources, service, and training to stabilize families.
- 3) Provide opportunities to build economic strength through agencies that promote growth and assistance to those seeking financial literacy, housing and employment.

Additionally, these reports address the region's high population of veterans, one of the largest in the country. Because two VA medical centers service our immediate area, (the regional VA offices in Waco and the largest military base in the world at nearby Fort Hood) our region is home to many of our nation's servicemen and women.

### Primary Focus Area

We use the Poverty Solution Task Force analysis to determine how we can continue to help our region. Our services include recruiting and managing volunteers and supporting the local programs and agencies dedicated to the Task Force's three objectives. 71% of our volunteers will serve in the

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Primary Focus Area, "Healthy Futures." These volunteers collaborate with established resource providers, including delivering nutritious meals to the homebound elderly in our region addressing "Aging in Place" and by serving in five area food pantries addressing "Obesity and Food" by collecting, stocking and distributing food staples to the underprivileged.

### **Other Focus Areas**

RSVP will address Other Focus Areas by aligning 22% of our volunteer force with the community-specific needs identified by the Poverty Solutions Task Force. These volunteers will work with partnering agencies that support our efforts and help RSVP document, track, and report our outcomes and outputs. We will support "Capacity Building and Leverage" as we assist agencies that serve the poor, such as thrift stores and outreach programs. At these sites, volunteers will provide leadership and manpower to collect, organize and distribute donated goods that ultimately, when sold, will also provide funds for food, utility assistance and other basic human needs. RSVP volunteers will serve on governing boards that provide strategic planning and program oversight. In addition, volunteers will train as board members and then lead programs such as Head Start, Child Care Services, Weatherization Assistance and Emergency Outreach Services. We will promote "Economic Opportunities" by addressing unemployment through programs like our GED Support Program, training other volunteers to assist in housing low-income families with Habitat for Humanity and fostering financial literacy through tax aid assistance and money management counseling. Volunteers will assist veterans in transitional programs that address education, training and employment. These volunteers will serve as mentors and supervisors for returning veterans and their families that are in service learning projects to gain job training and skills.

### **Community Priorities**

7% of our volunteers will serve in areas of "Community Priorities" that address the high rate of at-risk seniors in our region. RSVP volunteers will assist graduating programs that provide Ombudsman advocacy for nursing home residents and hospice care for those in the last stage of their lives. A developing education program with volunteer assignments is in place at McLennan Community College and can grow. Eventually, our hope is to partner with other partner programs to develop this area into an "other focus area" project. Programs like AmeriCorps, Communities in Schools and the Red Cross have all demonstrated a willingness and desire to collaborate with RSVP. After our "Community Priority" programs are graduated, 100% of our programming and volunteer assignments will align with the Corporation for National and Community Service's vision to support people and organizations in Primary and Other Focus Areas.

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### Graduating Programs

Currently, RSVP is managing programs that will no longer fall into the reporting scope of the Corporation for National and Community Services. Sites that will be affected are congregate meals, nursing home support groups and museums. In the early months of 2014, RSVP will send a letter to the volunteers that explains the new focus of CNCS. We will offer options to the sites. For the most part, each site will be offered re-purposing opportunities for service. A good example of this process would be in the case of congregate meals. Each congregate site is located in a senior center. These centers also often offer Meals on Wheels. Volunteers will be encouraged to utilize their service time and energy to support the mission of MOW. We will also offer other options for service in programs we are supporting. Staff will meet with each site, manager and volunteer so that they will feel they have value and can continue to serve their community. Programs that are not in our new scope will be educated about our changes and we will partner with them in the transition process. No one is assuming this will be easy, however, we have always had good communication with our volunteers and strong relationships with our site managers. The transition will be handled with the upmost sensitivity because these volunteers are part of our community family. They have been faithful to RSVP. We care what happens to them, and we will do everything we can to make these changes as positive as possible.

### Outcomes and Outputs

Because The MCC RSVP program partners with established resource providers that provide us with data, MCC has the ability to produce accurate accounts of our services' outcomes and outputs. For their own national standard requirements, these agencies are required to report clients served and needs met. Therefore, monthly, quarterly and annual reports are already generated. With this experience in statistical collection, RSVP can gather information and combine it with our own volunteer records. For example, one of our partners, Meals on Wheels, tracks its effects through a series of documentation output instruments that include service delivery records, satisfaction surveys, pre and post-assessments, time sheets, and attendance logs. We will use RSVP service documentation like attendance logs, time sheets, on-site surveys, assessment forms and evaluations, and will input the combined data into our Mazula Volunteer Reporter software system. By merging our service partners' information with RSVP data, we calculate and share the measured outcomes of our work.

This data will hold us accountable to our work plans and National Performance Measures. In addition, McLennan Community College utilizes two other forms of data verification and reporting. An instrument called "Unit Level Plan" is used to strategically plan and track each component for

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every program at the institute. This tool allows each project to be blueprinted online and then tracked through the year for success and goals met. It requires constant input and accountability for each sector. The College utilizes this data to access information, analyze success and produce internal reports. It is a unique system within a system for documenting inputs and outcomes and ultimately assures sponsor oversight and responsiveness.

In summary, McLennan Community College will strengthen, supplement and coordinate our volunteers in their personal goal to address National Performance Measures by providing volunteer and staff management, development, legal-trust monitoring and transparent documentation of:

313 volunteers addressing "Healthy Futures"

71% in assignments serving: 1) Meals on Wheels and 2) Food Pantries

96 volunteers addressing "Other Focus Areas"

22% in assignments serving: 1) Veterans Transitional Care, mentoring returning veterans, 2) Capacity Building, managing volunteers and 3) Economic Opportunity, Adult Education/GED, Habitat for Humanity, Financial Literacy

35 volunteers addressing "Community Priorities"

7% in (graduating) assignments serving: 1) Hospice, 2) Ombudsmen and 3) Education

444 unduplicated volunteers will be tracked as they strengthen our communities and meet identified needs. RSVP will document their service and measure their impact through partnering agency records, RSVP surveys, logs, timesheets, pre and post assessments and through a multi-layered system utilized for strategic planning and outcome based documentation.

With a mission of "Servant Leadership" McLennan Community College represents the community (our middle name for 45 years) and the community is representative of RSVP.

### Recruitment and Development

RSVP volunteers are from a generation that was led and inspired by Americans George Patton, FDR, Billy Graham and Ronald Reagan, and many identify with those learning and leadership styles: honest, true and clear. Yet, most volunteers also understand the need to embrace new concepts and influence. McLennan Community College prides itself in being able to offer the best of both worlds. It understands that honoring the age group and understanding their traditions does not mean that the individuals do not also want to grow, learn and lead.

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In order to provide our volunteers with assignments that have depth and purpose, McLennan Community College (MCC) makes a priority of improving quality of life through education, cultural experiences, economic growth and development of good citizenship through courses, activities and service. Countless opportunities are afforded to this region through the institution and its programs, such as RSVP.

### **Training and Skill Building**

Emphasis is placed on offering students, citizens and volunteers skill building opportunities. Training for volunteers and staff is offered, encouraged and strongly supported by MCC, and these facilities are made available with a wide array of resources. For example, MCC has lecture halls, emergency response education, veteran specialists, over a dozen health career programs such as nursing and gerontology, cultural and workforce development programs all on site. With the programs come a full scope of instructors and trainers that are easily accessible through the college's superior faculty and staff. MCC provides constant training for not only the community, but also for staff and volunteers. Every staff member participates in professional development, current technical training and skill building opportunities, and individual professional development plans are required of all MCC employees. In addition, the college encourages and supports training provided by the Corporation for National Service, One Star and related agencies. Training is also provided annually to station site leaders and volunteers. Additionally, RSVP has the ability to bring professionals from an extensive speaker's bureau to train on hundreds of timely topics.

### **Leadership Opportunities**

Skilled and experienced volunteers are offered leadership opportunities through community projects and activities such as site management, events, conferences, training, committees and boards. The college understands that people are life-long learners and offers a full array of education in the arts, workforce development, vocational and technical programs, personal growth and life enrichment. This allows our RSVP volunteers constant exposure to our community and access to unlimited opportunities to share, grow, and recruit other volunteers. MCC embraces opportunities to be innovative and plans to implement and measure those opportunities.

RSVP has 75 active and diverse volunteer stations and 34 of these sites have RSVP volunteers in leadership roles. In simple terms, 48% of the Heart of Texas RSVP volunteer sites have developed leadership opportunities for their volunteers.

### **Resources**

RSVP often hosts volunteer management conferences and senior related workshops on topics like

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fraud prevention, legal affairs, and health-related programs. RSVP puts together training sessions that are requested by volunteers on subjects such as "Technology for Seniors," "Robert's Rules," "Disaster Preparedness," "Healthy Choices," "Mental Health for Seniors" and "Cultural Experiences." Experts from many areas of service facilitate workshops for RSVP for our volunteer site agencies on areas of interest such as "Working with Difficult Volunteers," "Motivation and Commitment Building," "Communication," "Public Relations" and "Working with Baby Boomers."

Being housed in a college allows RSVP the opportunity to provide outstanding workshops, facilities and resources to educate our volunteers, managers and staff. We have an excellent theater and music division that bring the arts to our volunteers in an affordable and accessible manner. It is clear and obvious that volunteers reflect on their experiences, build new skills if needed, develop leadership abilities and enhance the quality of their lives by serving others in meaningful assignments. Through the provision of all these resources, MCC creates an ideal environment for nurturing volunteers so they can reach their highest potential and access learning and cultural opportunities.

### **Community Recruitment Input**

RSVP routinely offers networking opportunities such as the Veterans Coalition meetings. Volunteers are offered opportunities to expand their knowledge, be creative and act as change agents in their own communities. To demonstrate another way that RSVP embraces local input and assures meaningful volunteer opportunities and long-term impact, MCC has created an additional volunteer task force with 15 unbiased professionals from the college. Working as a separate and innovative planning body separate from the Advisory Council, the "Think Tank" addresses concerns, plans for the future, helps seek sustainable funding and provides insight into program development. They identify volunteer needs and create new capacity-building programs by strategically planning for the upcoming growth and impact of this program and those we serve. This group meets on an as needed basis and partners with the RSVP Advisory Council. Unlike the Council, whose affiliation and partnerships assure cross-representation from the community, the members of the separate volunteer task force were chosen for their expertise in areas such as human resources, social work, finance, marketing and media. By combining the resources, skills and contributions of both groups, RSVP encourages and fosters broader ideas and more diverse opportunities for the volunteers and the RSVP project.

### **Quality Assurance**

The "Think Tank," along with our Community Advisory Council, station sites, social service partners and the volunteers, has an opportunity to complete a partnership participation survey, the annual program satisfaction evaluation survey or both. With such diverse input, programs are able to

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adequately address individual volunteer needs and concerns, and also address the issues of the larger communities in which they serve. A worksite evaluation and survey is conducted annually by staff from each station site, which assures that the project is viable, safe and problem free. Should issues arise, the tool documents the progress. Essentially, the survey helps document goals met, impact made and site input/outcomes are clear. Because we take the documentation to such a high level, the worksites have previously engaged in our process and have a clear understanding of performance measurement. This way, data is assured.

Through the CNCS state office-approved MOU and work plan development process, each site is evaluated for safety, non-profit status and impact. Performance measures are detailed and agreed upon. Each site must qualify as a non-profit (with documentation on file), faith-based or a health care facility. Safety is closely monitored and checked twice annually. An on-site review safety form is completed and also kept on file. Job descriptions are developed and distributed to each volunteer and site manager, kept on file at the site and in each volunteer file at the RSVP office. These documents are also monitored twice annually for changes, updates in status and are used to confirm each volunteer is serving in their assigned service activity.

The College-administered strategic planning tool, known as the Unit Level Plan (ULP), is required of RSVP to show goals, outcomes and measurements of each aspect of this project-not just the volunteer's outcomes. This document is monitored constantly, updated quarterly and read by every level of administration to ensure that quality volunteer assignments and goals are a reality. The ULP has created a check and balance system for RSVP and guarantees long-range planning, data collection, measurement of success and analysis of problem areas.

To increase the number of outcome-based assignments and build a stable force, RSVP hosts an array of volunteer opportunities to meet social and economic needs of the area including civic, business, environmental, nonprofit, emergency services, legal and health care placements.

### **Enrollment**

The program has had a consistent enrollment of more than 800 volunteers per year over the past five years which is a direct result of the commitment of staff to methodically match people in need with people who care. Often it is related to the social interaction of volunteers between their peers or community, but even more often it is the direct result of placing volunteers with meaningful assignments that truly makes a difference and a continuing understanding and willingness to adjust. With scheduled training, extensive recognition efforts and worthy yet flexible assignments, this RSVP has excellent retention rates. Last year RSVP mobilized at least 650 RSVP volunteers in programming

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for impact assignments. This statistic proves that more than half of our enrolled volunteers are a direct result of RSVP's capacity-building volunteer recruitment and leadership. Our records prove that over 800 of our total volunteers were considered "active" by serving on a systematic schedule. A more detailed report reflects that almost two-thirds of our volunteers are led by RSVP volunteer supervisors.

The reports reflecting high volunteer leadership are a result of intense efforts in quality recruitment, training and recognition. Although RSVP will graduate some sites and become more CNCS focus centered, every effort will be made to "re-purpose" volunteers into high impact, initiative areas.

### **Media and Public Outreach**

Emphasis is placed on recruiting through constant media and public communication. Every newspaper, radio, television station, local magazine, newsletter and bulletin in the region is contacted with weekly press releases. We are fortunate to have solid support from local television stations such as KXXV-TV which provides two local news anchors to emcee our annual recognition event and continual support from radio and newspapers in the area. With a full marketing division at the college, professional quality is a given and the outreach is broad. We have Web sites, social media and regular television and radio appearances. RSVP is a routine placement site for Baylor University Public Relations interns and Texas State Technical College multi-media students. We are fortunate to have the manpower to address media outreach on a daily basis.

### **Retention**

We take a holistic approach to meeting the needs of the volunteers and believe it leads to successful retention. Quarterly personal phone or physical contact with every volunteer in our program and station site manager is standard. If a problem exists, volunteers are offered opportunities to change positions, sites or supervisors. Sometimes external influences are a factor and the simple act of regularly calling and communicating with our volunteers can bring a solution. Because our RSVP office also sponsors mental health and social work student interns, we always have a ready supply of problem solvers available to meet the needs of our volunteers. For example, interns help our volunteers with information and referral issues such as locating resources and even aided a family last year in funeral arrangements. Regardless of the need, volunteers are treated with dignity and respect. We are here to serve them so that they can effectively serve others.

### **Recognition**

The H.O.T. RSVP Recognition Event is a cornerstone of our program and recruitment. Although the staff participates by offering praise and awards at the large, six-county event, the celebration also allows communities to say "thank you" to their volunteers. Internally, RSVP also concentrates on

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daily personal recognition through staff-signed birthday and thank you cards, phone calls, visits to sites and individualized site recognition events. Through personal contact, this project makes every effort to say thank you to each volunteer at least seven times per year.

### **Philosophy**

Literature, correspondence, recognition, media and our actions reflect to the volunteers that we are "their staff," not that they are just our volunteers.

### **Purposeful Assignments**

The U.S. Census data indicates that the Heart of Texas Region has almost twice the rate of seniors compared to the rest of the state. Thirty percent of our region's citizens did not complete their high school education. Illiteracy leads to poverty and is reflected by a high number of seniors with lower incomes and fewer resources. This problem has driven many of our projects into a critical direction of addressing senior service-related needs. With so many baby boomers and sandwich generation adults, programs such as Meals on Wheels and crisis intervention programs affect our total population, especially in our predominately rural region.

Volunteers work to meet the needs of this population, almost always recognizing their clients as neighbors, church members or friends. Often, these programs are a representation of programs that benefit the entire community. Ongoing dialog with these volunteers offers many opportunities for communication to ensure that volunteer placements are significant and meaningful because purposeful service is always a priority in selecting assignments for our volunteers. Mileage reimbursement is available for appropriate assignments and meals are made available when needed. Much attention is placed on providing benefits such as training and support to the volunteers, site managers, agency staff and case managers to assure successful outcomes. The H.O.T. RSVP staff, along with MCC resources, is able to provide outstanding technical support to our region, but we do much more than simply offer training. For example, when a station site is having a special event or has a site-specific need, RSVP is able to work with the MCC Public Relations Department and develop everything from press releases to graphic poster designs to broadcasting the issue. RSVP, through MCC and its cooperative relationship, can assess and utilize countless technical resources to support our volunteer sites. We have an entire department that focuses on computer training and offers training just for senior adults. We can include any staff volunteer in development training made available on campus.

### **Advocacy and Special Event Opportunities**

This RSVP actively participates in Senior Day at the Texas State Capital, national days of service such

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as Martin Luther King Day and 11 other events. Led by Advisory Council members, volunteers are allowed the opportunity to meet with legislators in order to educate them on their needs, provide annual service to recognize the importance of giving time and effort and help celebrate and honor others in days of remembrance such as Veteran's Day activities. MCC also has a fleet of buses, vans and drivers available as needed to transport volunteers to events and training.

### **Ethnic, Sexual Orientation and Language Recruitment**

As a community college, MCC offers an array of opportunities to every possible ethnic group and by nature of the community centered campus, reflects all diverse populations regardless of sexual orientation, background or language. In the same building that houses RSVP, also you will find ESL classes with volunteers in place, training for the deaf, child care programs, continuing education for all possible interests and experiences. Diversity is not only encouraged, it is mandated by policy and law that we do not discriminate at our institution. As a community college, all ages are welcomed and data proves that the make-up of the College is broad and representative of the community it serves. RSVP reflects this diversity as well. For example, Freestone and Falls County show a population of 50% plus African Americans and Hispanic citizens. Our participating sites mirror that diversity. Our enrollment data prove that many volunteers with disabilities have assignments that meet their needs.

### **Veteran Recruitment and Programs**

There are over 600 veteran students and dependents enrolled currently at MCC . The College has been nationally designated as a "SOS Vet Friendly" campus and hosts many programs and associations to serve our heroes. In addition, the MCC RSVP currently manages a grant from the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) that focuses on providing RSVP mentors to veterans as they are guided through a transitional program that teaches skills to younger vets through service learning opportunities in area non-profits. TVC funds allow two staff members to be 100% dedicated to recruiting and managing the RSVP volunteers and their sponsors for this project. Recruitment is constant and reaches all 6 counties.

In summary, MCC RSVP recruits through a responsive commitment to its volunteers, best practices, substantial community involvement and unique opportunities for the volunteers in its program. In addition, MCC operates a full public relations and marketing department that not only oversees information concerning RSVP and assures quality, but also helps the program develop outreach products, public service announcements, presentation materials and recruitment activities.

### **Added Recruitment Infrastructure**

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Through partnerships with neighboring colleges such as Baylor University, Tarleton State University and Texas State Technical College, the Heart of Texas RSVP is able to utilize approximately 10-12 student interns at any given time to develop everything from brochures to media releases that highlight the service and impact of the volunteer force. These interns also provide distinctive support services and resources for the volunteers in our program because by augmenting the time and outreach of the paid staff. To be accepted into the RSVP internship, the students are required to 1) recruit volunteers 2) develop a project that provides a volunteer resource, and 3) work directly with the volunteers and their stations to help them build capacity. This added staff infrastructure adds great outreach ability and resources for our volunteers and sight managers.

### **Volunteers with Disabilities**

Identified physical barriers are accounted for and accommodated. Staff is active in the Mayor's Committee for Disabilities and many volunteers that have physical limitations are able to serve with this project. MCC RSVP is mandated and monitored for ADA compliance and safety. There are many opportunities for volunteer experiences regardless of language or background as the college prides itself in welcoming all. Annually, RSVP hosts a health and information fair that brings together over 6,000 seniors for free medical screenings and information. Hundreds of participants with disabilities attend and recruitment is a key activity at this event.

We individualize service projects to meet broad personal goals. Recruitment is accomplished through many means such as personal attention, presentations and opportunities but also clearly include the instant recognition of working along-side such a large and supportive organization that serves our volunteer's families and communities. Retention is sustained through best practices, follow-through, quality experiences and making sure that the volunteers not only hear about the impact they make but are recognized appropriately.

Finally, RSVP volunteers have the opportunity to experience more than just assigned tasks or even short-term impact projects. Being part of RSVP means being part of the College and all it has to offer. MCC has a 25-year history of working along-side the volunteers to meet community needs and to enhance lives in the process.

People act best when they are passionate about what they do and have the opportunity to put that spirit into action. With appropriate training and support, their impact is expanded and far reaching.

### **Program Management**

To ensure quality program management and strategic planning at the McLennan Community College (MCC) RSVP Program, goals and objectives are selected by targets that are identified most often by

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the extensive research. Provided by the Poverty Solutions Task Force that is a combined report merging the community needs assessments of the Heart of Texas Council of Governments Legislative Appropriation Request , The Heart of Texas Area Agency on Aging, United Way Emergency Food and Shelter Program, Caritas Emergency Services Program, the Equal Opportunities Advancement Corporation (E.O.A.C., Community Action Agency ) and the Texas Veterans Commission as well as the data collected by the MCC Institutional and Effectiveness Division. Volunteer sites are primarily identified and maintained through these targets and also recognize community interest and volunteer involvement.

All proposals, grants, reports and assignments require supervisory approval. Advisory Council meetings are routinely attended by several high ranking administrators from the College that includes a division director, dean and Board of Trustee member. MCC takes its fiduciary responsibility seriously. MCC RSVP has not had a federal audit deficiency or finding in over twenty years and on its last CNCS monitoring, was found to be in exemplary standing without program areas needing improvement or barriers.

To assess project performance and ensure goals are met, this project has developed an extensive performing for impact evaluation system. This system forces constant communication and measurement-driven responses from site managers, clients, volunteers and agency leadership. Extensive surveys are conducted twice annually with every site to monitor results, prevent duplication, assure quality placement and examine accomplishments. In addition, MCC conducts full evaluations of program success as well as extensive strategic planning with training provided. This evaluation process is annual with bi-annual reporting.

To manage information and data, this office has set up a system that provides constant review and validation of documentation. MCC has exceeded requirements routinely and assures quality through several tiers of verification. Every time sheet, survey and data collecting tool is checked extensively and validated by a minimum of three staff members to ensure quality information and compliance with CNCS. No one person is solely responsible for data collection. Every piece of documentation goes through a detailed system to assure mistakes are at a minimum and all service-hour documentation is correct.

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In addition, every volunteer file goes through an annual internal audit we refer to as the "paper path."

Every time sheet, work plan, job description or related documentation is audited for completion and errors. We review the volunteer files for logical connections between each point of documentation.

Time sheets must link to enrollment forms and in turn, they must link to Memorandums of Understandings (MOU's). The path from first contact to service reporting must prove complete and correct. During that annual process, each volunteer is personally contacted by phone to confirm updated information such as addresses, phone numbers and insurance details.

In 2012, approximately 80% of our RSVP volunteers served in outcome-based assignments. All our participants are accounted for within internal work plans. Every site has current community needs assessments, job descriptions, regular site visits, safety checks and evaluations. Every volunteer is contacted by phone on a quarterly basis to assure satisfying quality assignments, problem solving opportunities and clear communication. Tasks are monitored to assure that they match the job description assigned and to assure that the goals of the project are being met. Should a problem arise or current assignments are no longer appropriate, staff meets with the site manager for evaluation and review. New assignments are developed or should the site no longer be viable, it is deactivated and volunteers are encouraged to be re-purposed in meaningful tasks that meet our strategic plan.

Service hours are only accepted with supervisory signed confirmation and are methodically documented and filed for record. This project is privileged to have a surplus of staff that can dedicate themselves to guarantee accurate and complicant documentation and assignments

We have a plan to graduate congregate meal volunteers by re-training and to re-purposing them for Meals on Wheels. Since most of these volunteers serve in the same physical location and are comfortable with the management staff, we feel confident that this will be an easy transition.

### Primary Focus Area

Currently, 71% of our volunteers serve in the "Primary Forcus Areas" (Healthy Futures), 22% in "Other Focus Areas" (Veterans, Economic Opportunity and Capacity Building) and only 7% in "Community Priorities"(Hospice, Ombudsman and Education). We feel this is a strong idication that we have been aggressively moving toward the CNCS direction of meeting preformance measurement iniatives.

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### Advisory Council, Boards and Committees

McLennan Community College RSVP enjoys the experience, knowledge and forward thinking of multiple advisory groups.

RSVP Advisory Council- 15 members ranging in a scope that includes volunteers, site managers, elected officials and college administration representing all our counties. The Council meets quarterly and as needed concerning special events or needs. It represents all aspects of the project, provides input for program management and development, work plan development and needs assessments. Conducts annual organizational effectiveness survey. The group helps lead political advocacy and fund raising and has multiple committees such as recognition, legislative, fund raising and public relations. It also assists with presentations, often speaking publicly on our behalf.

"Think Tank"- 15 professional volunteers from MCC staff and faculty that problem solve, seek funding opportunities, help create projects and break down barriers to community outreach projects.

Veteran "Connect a Vet" Council-Advises RSVP on Veteran needs and resources. Leads orientations for Veteran volunteers, advises on military protocol and assists in promoting the mission of the transitional program. Lead by a Brigadier General and utilizes the knowledge and experiences of eight veterans.

McLennan Community College Health and Human Services Advisory Council- addresses community needs such as mental health, student interns, social work and various programs addressed by RSVP.

McLennan Community College Board of Trustees- holds full fiduciary responsibility, community elected term positions. Oversight to financial, programmatic and operational areas for the College and RSVP.

Unique to this program is that each advisory council/board within the compass of the RSVP project utilizes cross-representation to assure clear communication and collaboration between each group. Involvement is heavy and members are vested and engaged.

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All these entities are utilized to ensure sound management and development of RSVP volunteer sites. Each volunteer station is visited two times annually with a site survey completed. This information is inclusive of safety issues, assignment assessments, impact data and satisfaction reviews. The information is documented and used by the College, the advisory councils and the staff to gauge and measure the program. With these bi-annual assessments and including monthly phone contact and staff involvement, the College is able to adjust goals, assignments or focus as appropriate.

### **Organizational Capability**

With a record of more than 45 years of meeting community needs through education, outreach and civic involvement, McLennan Community College (MCC) has hosted the Heart of Texas RSVP for approximately 25 years. This long-standing relationship has been beneficial for both the College and the program. Along with the history of managing other social service-related grants, the institution is committed to volunteerism as a whole. With service and cultural experience in its mission statement, MCC's elected Board of Trustees embraces the concept of reaching out to their constituents. To prove its strong belief, MCC not only actively involves itself in programs such as RSVP, Vista and many other service programs, it does not draw any administrative costs from those grants. Instead, MCC contributes almost a 98% cash and in-kind match.

Although primarily an educational institution, MCC values its community service. Partnering with RSVP is a logical outgrowth of its service orientation. It is in the best interest of the community, our citizens, the college, and its related programs to help the capacity of organizations in the region. MCC routinely provides workforce employees training and continuing education to meet the licensing requirements for virtually every non-profit, social service agency in the entire region. All policies and procedures are accessible on-line and monitored for compliance. Each policy applicable to RSVP is also approved by its advisory council. Those specific policies are also provided to each volunteer station site and copies are kept at the RSVP offices.

For a healthy partnership with its community, MCC strives to provide quality services and meaningful volunteer placements. For the last ten years, RSVP has been managed as part of the Human Services division. Included in that division are educational programs that provide training in the areas of aging, long-term health care administration, counseling and social work. The division has managed a number of grants apart from the Senior Corps effort and strives to integrate all its programs to enhance the region. The college actively participates in every aspect of the program, grant writing and volunteer development.

MCC has assembled a professional management staff to oversee the operation of RSVP. The

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immediate Project Director is a Licensed Baccalaureate Social Worker with more than 30 years of experience in senior related volunteer management. This full time, 100% RSVP position oversees the development of work plans and reports to the Chair of Human Services and Education Division. This Division Chair holds a Master's of Science in Gerontology and previously led organizations who utilize the services of RSVP. Both his training and experience assure that he has a hands-on understanding of the program.

Human Services and Education is part of the larger division of Education and Learning Services. The Dean of this division holds a Master's degree in Human Development and an undergraduate degree in child development and family life. She has more than 25 years of experience in post-secondary education and administration. At the top of the chain of command are the Vice President of Instruction and the President of the College. Both have doctorate degrees and collectively represent more than 50 years of administrative leadership, grant management experience and extensive community service and involvement.

Due to the size and resources of a college campus, RSVP is fortunate to have modern office space that includes over 900 square feet, equipment and technical support. Aside from routine business accounting and grant management, the College employs separate staff for the monitoring, purchasing, accounting and inventory of supplies, equipment and program assets. Policies are strictly enforced and follow all federal and state mandated OMB regulations.

MCC employs a complete staff to develop, implement and evaluate institutional effectiveness. Annual strategic planning is required for every campus program and is more detailed than the federal grant application or reporting process. This system has extensive steps for reporting measures, short-term and long-term planning and community (program) needs. Training is provided several times a year in which each step of this planning process and every need, goal, approach, activity, measurement, assessment and related costs are available to every supervisory chain of command at MCC. This strategic "Unit Level Planning" process has built-in accountability, including scheduled benchmarks and timelines.

MCC has a full time public information staff to manage media and develop printed materials and a staff for resource development. A high level of professionalism is used for releasing public information concerning RSVP and policies are in place to protect the program and to reach elevated distribution. Public Service announcements, web design, media releases and any marketing efforts are supported by a staff of educated professionals with many years of experience in media and public relations. The College also has a 501(c)3 foundation that assists the RSVP to seek and obtain external funding.

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Most recently, the MCC Foundation secured a large grant through the Texas Veterans Commission to provide Veteran transitional volunteer services to help our returning service men and women. This is just one example of the commitment and support the College brings to the project.

### Fiscal Oversight

To ensure that financial and in-kind resources are appropriately managed, MCC employs a separate accounting division under the leadership of the Vice President of Finance and Administration, who has earned both an MBA and a BBA in Accounting and has over 35 years of experience in fiscal management. There is a checks and balance system for every aspect of operation. RSVP also has an assigned senior grants accountant that internally processes and audits transactions, grant resources and donations. To guarantee accurate information, the grant accountant files all financial reports and funding requests with the use of an internal system built on an infrastructure of policies that adhere to all state and federal guidelines, statutes, regulations and applicable OMB circulars.

To further ensure accountability, McLennan Community College follows set procedure that has a signature and approval structure that includes seven authorities above the RSVP Project Director.

The Project Director, Division Chair, Dean, Vice Presidents, President and elected Board of Trustees are provided budget reports and access to account information regularly. All levels have input. Policies and procedures are strictly enforced. No matter how small the purchase or programming decision, there are layers of expertise involved to assure operating procedures are followed and needs are met through legal, focused and documented approaches. In addition, the College is monitored through an independent audit each year. Each grant submission is the collective product of many departments at MCC. Every responsible party has input in the design and implementation of the program.

All these professionals meet with RSVP routinely, serve on our Advisory Council and work closely to develop grant opportunities, write proposal applications, promote the program and process our business needs in a closely monitored and audited infrastructure.

In every area, department, division and educational outreach, MCC utilizes the Unit Level Planning process to link logical and accountable areas together. A complex software program makes it almost impossible for any department, program or responsible party to be left uninformed, unaccountable or unmonitored. Simply stated, McLennan Community College leads by example.

### Other

n/a

### PNS Amendment (if applicable)

## Narratives

n/a