

Narratives

Executive Summary

Cecil County, Maryland, Department of Senior Services and Community Transit (SSCT) requests \$100,274 from the Corporation for National and Community Service to develop, implement and manage the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program in Cecil County and Harford County, Maryland; the project from hereon will be referred to as Cecil/Harford RSVP. SSCT projects an estimated 375 RSVP volunteers will serve with Cecil/Harford RSVP in the two county region providing service activities in alignment with National Performance Measures. SSCT has selected Healthy Futures as the Primary Focus Area for Cecil/Harford RSVP. RSVP volunteers will deliver meals to homebound senior adults; provide transportation for clients (homebound seniors, older adults, individuals with disabilities) to medical appointments; provide companionship to homebound individuals or those in need of increased social support; support food pantries that provide emergency food assistance for economically disadvantaged individuals; and serve as coaches/leaders for evidence-based health education programs.

At the end of the three-year grant, it is estimated 170 homebound senior adults (or those in need of socialization) will report having increased social ties due to their interactions with RSVP volunteers who have either delivered meals, made home visits or phone calls; 50 clients will have access to transportation to medical appointments provided by RSVP volunteers; 500 individuals will receive emergency food assistance at food pantries supported by RSVP volunteers; and 75 individuals experiencing chronic conditions and/or pain will have participated in evidence-based health education programs led by RSVP volunteers.

Strengthening Communities

Cecil County and Harford County, Maryland, are located along the I-95 corridor midway between Baltimore and Philadelphia. Cecil County borders Delaware and Pennsylvania with approximately 70% of the county's 348 square miles being farmland. Harford County, with a land area of 440 square miles, is located in the north central portion of Maryland and borders Baltimore County, Pennsylvania, the Susquehanna River, and the Chesapeake Bay. The combined population of the two counties is 348,183 (Cecil: 101,694; Harford: 246,489). Of the combined population, 12.7% are age 65 and older. In terms of percentage growth of Maryland's senior (65+) population, Cecil County is expected to rank 6th among the state's jurisdictions; Harford County is expected to rank 10th. Of the 12,220 adults age 65 and older in Cecil County, 24.4% live alone. Of the 31,952 adults age 65 and older in Harford County, 21.2% live alone (2011 American Community Survey, Maryland Department of

Narratives

Planning).

According to the 2013 County Health Rankings, out of Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City, Harford County residents rank 10th in overall county health; Cecil County residents rank 19th in overall health (University of Wisconsin, www.countyhealthrankings.org). Both counties report a combined population of 34,881 individuals with disabilities; 30% of individuals 65 and older have at least one disability. Cecil County residents report the following chronic conditions: 42.6% have high blood pressure, 42.7% have high cholesterol levels, and 12.8% have diabetes. Harford County residents report the following chronic conditions: 31.6% have high blood pressure, 39.8% have high cholesterol levels, and 8.4% have diabetes 8.4% (2009 Cecil County Community Health Survey; www.healthyharford.org).

In 2011 the unemployment rate for both counties was higher than the Maryland state average of 7% with Cecil County reporting 10.8% and Harford County reporting 7.8%. According to the 2009-2011 American Community Survey, 10.1% of Cecil County's total population are living below the poverty level; in Harford County 5.5% of the total population are living below the poverty level. Of the families living below the poverty level, Cecil County reports 11% are families with children under the age of 18, and 19.3% are families with children under the age of five. In Harford County, 9.4% of families living below the poverty level are families with children under the age of 18, and 10% are families with children under the age of five. Approximately 8% of households in Cecil County do not have access to a car, and 26% of households have access to only one vehicle. In Harford County, 5.3% of households do not have access to a car; 26.9% have access to only one vehicle (2011 American Community Survey).

Cecil County Senior Services & Community Transit (SSCT), the sponsoring agency for Cecil/Harford RSVP, is the local Office on Aging. SSCT has extensive experience in developing and managing outcome based programs that meet critical community needs, especially in the selected Primary Focus Area: Healthy Futures. In partnership with the Maryland Department of Aging and with the Maryland Transit Administration, SSCT promotes an enhanced quality of life for a diverse population of older adults through programs and services while also offering accessible transit opportunities for residents of all ages. SSCT will recruit, place, and support RSVP volunteers who, through their acts of service with organizations and agencies in the project area, will meet the needs of some of the counties' most vulnerable individuals: homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities who are striving to live independently but are desperately in need of essential services to maintain their health while remaining in their homes. RSVP volunteers will deliver nutritious meals to homebound

Narratives

individuals and provide much-needed socialization opportunities. RSVP volunteers will provide transportation to medical appointments for older adults and/or individuals with disabilities who otherwise might not be able to receive treatment or preventive care. RSVP volunteers will offer companionship and social connections through home visits and phone calls to persons who are lonely or isolated; visits will also help provide relief for emotionally taxed caregivers. RSVP volunteers will meet the needs of individuals who are economically disadvantaged and in need of emergency food assistance by providing support to local food pantries. Individuals with chronic conditions will find ways to self manage their health through the assistance of volunteers who serve as coaches/leaders of evidence based health education workshops. Volunteers will play a proactive role by distributing health services information to residents; citizens who are well-informed of services and programs make better decisions enabling them to experience improved overall health.

As the local Office on Aging, SSCT staff members are experienced in collecting, managing and reporting data to the Maryland Department of Aging and the Maryland Transit Administration. SSCT has systems in place -- for example, the Maryland Department of Aging Advanced Information Manager (AIM) data reporting system -- for state-mandated and local government data collection. SSCT has an exceptional reputation for submitting client and programming reports in a timely fashion.

In addition, SSCT has functioned as an RSVP station for 5 years in partnership with the current RSVP sponsor, Harford County, Maryland. During this time, SSCT created a system for collecting volunteer data (hours served and impact on the community). SSCT submitted all required information on time to the sponsor. SSCT is experienced in creating and using volunteer time sheets, surveys, and activity logs. The SSCT Volunteer Program staff members have used the Volunteer Reporter software program for 5 years to assist in data management aligned with the National Performance Measures. SSCT will continue to have a strong partnership with Harford County, Maryland, in order to oversee the RSVP program in the two-county region. SSCT will rely on the expertise of staff within the Harford County Department of Community Services to provide direction on emerging community needs and how RSVP service activities can address those needs.

Cecil/Harford RSVP will recruit RSVP volunteers to visit veterans at the Perry Point VA Medical Center. Perry Point is located in Cecil County but serves veterans in both Cecil and Harford Counties. RSVP volunteers will provide companionship through one-on-one visits or through the coordination of group activities. In addition to providing companionship to veterans at Perry Point, homebound senior adults who are veterans will receive services provided by RSVP volunteers through Home

Narratives

Delivered Meals, volunteer transportation, in-home Friendly Visits and/or Telephone Reassurance calls. SSCT is also exploring the implementation of a new initiative-- Senior Centers Without Walls (a telephone-based program for homebound or isolated senior adults) -- to include a group specific to the needs of veterans. The activity, ideally led by an RSVP volunteer who is also a veteran, would provide additional services to veterans in the community needing support and increased social ties.

Although not mentioned in the Primary Focus Area, Other Focus Area, or Capacity Building work plans, SSCT has promoted an annual veterans trip for county veterans to Washington, DC. The trip was first organized in 2011 by a community volunteer, who is under the age of 55. The volunteer has acted independently of any organization or agency to provide veterans of all ages and branches of service a free day-long trip to the Washington, DC war memorials and Arlington Cemetery. SSCT has supported the trip by helping identify local veterans who are in need of an outing and companionship; it is our desire to continue in this role for future trips.

Recruitment and Development

Senior Services & Community Transit (SSCT), the sponsor for Cecil/Harford RSVP, has an existing, well-developed volunteer program. SSCT staff members are experienced in identifying potential volunteers who enhance the agency's programs and services while creating personal satisfaction and fulfillment for the volunteer. SSCT takes great pride in volunteers who have become the "eyes and ears" of the department, alerting staff to senior adults in need of assistance. As the sponsor for Cecil/Harford RSVP, SSCT will assure high quality volunteer assignments by using the following strategies: 1) utilizing RSVP volunteers as special event and/or project leaders (i.e. National Days of Service activities); 2) promoting leadership roles for RSVP volunteers through advisory board memberships (RSVP Advisory Council and/or the boards of local nonprofit organizations); 3) tapping into the skills of RSVP volunteers who can provide training and presentations on specific topics to RSVP stations, RSVP volunteers, or community groups; and 4) soliciting feedback from volunteers on an ongoing basis to measure the satisfaction of assignments and the effectiveness of projects.

SSCT understands the importance of providing training to volunteers in order to equip them for service. As the sponsor for Cecil/Harford RSVP, SSCT will ensure RSVP project staff use existing -- or create new -- partnerships with local agencies and organizations to provide training and technical assistance to RSVP volunteers and RSVP station supervisors. In partnership with SSCT, the Department of Social Services, Upper Bay Counseling and Support Services, the Department of Emergency Services, Cecil County Government, and the Harford County Department of Community Services, Cecil/Harford RSVP will provide training for RSVP volunteers who are in direct contact with

Narratives

homebound senior adults (meal delivery, companionship, transportation). Training will include (but will not be limited to) CPR/First Aid, defensive driving, accessing adult protective services, and recognizing depression/suicidal tendencies in older adults. Cecil/Harford RSVP will partner with local school systems and/or public libraries to coordinate training for volunteers working with children (the training will supplement the mandatory child protective services training all school volunteers must attend). Cecil/Harford RSVP will use the above-mentioned partners to coordinate training sessions at low or no cost, if possible; however, project staff will budget grant funds to pay trainers and/or presenters when necessary to provide appropriate training. In addition to providing training for volunteers, Cecil/Harford RSVP will host quarterly volunteer coordinator networking and training sessions for RSVP station supervisors. Cecil/Harford RSVP will promote a monthly lunchtime Volunteer Coordinator Roundtable, hosted by Harford County Department of Community Services, to existing and potential RSVP stations. As funding allows, grant monies will be used to pay 1-2 speakers per year to present training sessions on volunteer management issues for RSVP station supervisors.

The combined population of Cecil County and Harford County is 348,183 (Cecil: 101,694; Harford: 246,489). For people reporting one race alone in Cecil County, 88.5% was White, 6.8% Black or African American, 1.4% Asian and the remainder was split among a variety of other races. For people reporting one race alone, 81.2% of the Harford County population was White, 12.4% Black or African American, 2.4% Asian and the remainder was split among a variety of other races. Of the combined population, 7.8% are veterans; 10% are individuals with disabilities. As the RSVP sponsor, SSCT already has experience in recruiting and managing a volunteer pool reflective of the community served. Of SSCT's current volunteers, 85% are White, 9% are Black or African American, 2% are Asian, 13% are veterans, and approximately 15% are disabled. SSCT will strive to reach out to all groups underrepresented through community presentations, advertisements (print, web, and radio), and networking events. During FY 14, Cecil/Harford RSVP will concentrate efforts on recruiting more veterans and individuals with disabilities. A community volunteer (who is under the age of 55), has created an informal veterans' network within the project area; this group will be targeted for RSVP recruitment. SSCT has an established relationship with the Elkton Vet Center, which sponsors a weekly veteran's support group at the Elkton Senior Center, which is located in the SSCT offices. Cecil/Harford RSVP will provide RSVP information and examples of service activities to the support group on a regular basis in an effort to reach out and encourage veterans to serve as RSVP volunteers. SSCT recently became a Maryland Access Point (MAP) site, which serves as an aging and disabilities

Narratives

resource center in the region. MAP will provide a way for Cecil/Harford RSVP to reach out to individuals with disabilities for RSVP recruitment.

SSCT and Cecil/Harford RSVP also recognize the need for recruiting younger volunteers (ages 55 to 65) for RSVP service in order to grow and sustain RSVP in the project area. Of SSCT's current volunteer pool, 16% are age 55-64, 43% are age 65-74, and 41% are age 75 and older. A recruitment campaign will include targeting individuals nearing retirement or those who are newly retired; Cecil/Harford RSVP will also encourage businesses to create employee volunteer programs for individuals 55+. Through partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce and businesses, Cecil/Harford RSVP will 1) make presentations to businesses for pre-retirees and/or for employee volunteer programs; 2) attend business networking events and/or business sponsored health fairs to promote RSVP; and 3) allocate grant funds for advertising in business publications and local media (newspapers, radio, billboards) to promote RSVP. Cecil/Harford RSVP will attend a variety of community events and health fairs to promote RSVP to all residents in the project area. In addition, Cecil/Harford RSVP will sponsor a 55+ Volunteer Fair in August; Harford County (through the Department of Community Services) hosts a Volunteer Expo in the spring. Due to the large geographic area served by the RSVP project, Cecil/Harford RSVP will budget funds to support both events (for advertising, promotional/recruitment items, and supplies). These events not only give project staff the opportunity to promote RSVP to residents, but RSVP stations are invited to participate to promote RSVP service activities with their respective organizations.

SSCT has a long history of retaining and recognizing volunteers. As the RSVP sponsor, SSCT will ensure Cecil/Harford RSVP allocates resources to create an atmosphere where volunteers are welcomed, equipped, valued, and publicly recognized. New RSVP volunteers will receive personal attention from project staff members who will ensure assignments are challenging and match the RSVP volunteers' interest and abilities. Project staff will make follow up phone calls to new RSVP volunteers after three months of service to assess if their assignments are satisfactory. RSVP stations will be encouraged to provide volunteers with personal attention (birthday cards, emails, phone calls) which are necessary to keep individuals connected and committed to a volunteer program. RSVP stations will provide ongoing feedback to the volunteer and to RSVP project staff on a volunteer's performance. All RSVP volunteers will be surveyed annually to assess their satisfaction with their volunteer assignment and with the organization's ability to meet their needs as a volunteer.

In order to equip volunteers for service, Cecil/Harford RSVP will ensure stations are providing the necessary orientation and training for their assigned RSVP volunteers. Project staff will coordinate

Narratives

training sessions for RSVP volunteers and/or RSVP station supervisors. Project staff will budget grant funds to help offset the cost of training or, if able, work with community partners to provide free training sessions.

Cecil/Harford RSVP understands and recognizes the liability and cost associated with volunteer assignments. The RSVP budget includes the federally required volunteer insurance (personal, liability and auto), all at no cost to volunteers. In order to help alleviate the financial burden of RSVP volunteers using their own vehicles while on volunteer assignment, the RSVP budget has allocated funds for mileage reimbursement. RSVP volunteers using their personal vehicles to drive clients to medical appointments and volunteers driving their personal vehicles to make in-home visits or to conduct health education classes will be eligible for mileage reimbursement, as long as funding allows. Special consideration will be given to RSVP volunteers whose financial situations present a barrier to volunteering; if providing mileage reimbursement enables the volunteer to continue serving, RSVP staff will make every effort to accommodate the need. The budget also includes funds to cover bus passes for volunteers who do not drive so they may serve with community organizations. Cecil/Harford RSVP will annually recognize RSVP volunteers at a Volunteer Appreciation Lunch; volunteers will be treated to a meal, receive certificates and small gifts. Smaller gatherings for volunteer groups will be organized (as funding allows) throughout the year to offer training, orientation and to allow RSVP volunteers time to build relationships with each other.

Program Management

As the Cecil/Harford RSVP sponsor, Senior Services & Community Transit (SSCT) will ensure the management of volunteer stations in compliance with RSVP federal program regulations by executing MOU agreements prior to the placement of RSVP volunteers. Cecil/Harford RSVP will create station MOU agreements with public or non-profit private organizations, or proprietary health care agencies that clearly define 1) the responsibilities of the station and sponsor; and 2) prohibited volunteer activities as explained in CFR 2553.91. RSVP station MOU agreements will require stations to comply with all applicable civil rights laws and regulations including the accommodation for RSVP volunteers with disabilities. Cecil/Harford RSVP will meet with potential stations to fully explain program regulations and expectations before the signing of the MOU agreement. All new RSVP stations will attend an orientation prior to the placement of RSVP volunteers within their organizations. Although MOU agreements will be renegotiated every three years, Cecil/Harford RSVP will meet annually with all stations to ensure compliance with federal regulations.

Cecil/Harford RSVP will develop and/or oversee volunteer stations to ensure volunteers are

Narratives

performing their assigned service activities by requiring stations to provide 1) written, well-defined volunteer assignment descriptions for their assigned RSVP volunteers and to the RSVP sponsor; 2) proper orientation, training, resources, supervision, and recognition to their assigned RSVP volunteers; and 3) reports on the impact assigned volunteers have in addressing community needs. Cecil/Harford RSVP will conduct site visits on a regular basis to assess the volunteer assignments for continued appropriateness. Furthermore, Cecil/Harford RSVP will provide stations and volunteers with any training and technical assistance needed in order to maximize their performance. Due to the large geographic region served by Cecil/Harford RSVP, Senior Services & Community Transit (SSCT) is requesting funding for a full-time RSVP Volunteer Development Associate who will provide assistance in station development and monitoring. The grant-funded staff member will assist the RSVP Project Director whose salary is provided by SSCT and is considered the local match.

Cecil/Harford RSVP does not intend to graduate any current RSVP stations; all current RSVP volunteers who are actively serving will not experience any disruption in service. However, Cecil/Harford RSVP does recognize the importance of creating a plan in the event stations and/or volunteer assignments are no longer meeting National Performance Measures. SSCT meets regularly with community organizations, government agencies, and business partners to evaluate community needs. A strong communication network exists within the project area; information on emerging trends and needs are quickly disseminated by email. Furthermore, Cecil/Harford RSVP will meet regularly with Harford County Department of Community Services staff, including the Office on Aging and Volunteer Harford, to stay informed on emerging needs within the entire project area. Cecil/Harford RSVP will rely on SSCT, the Harford County Department of Community Services, and other community partners to stay informed of new opportunities for RSVP volunteers to serve. When appropriate, SSCT and the Harford County Department of Community Services will include Cecil/Harford RSVP project staff in meetings so they can relay RSVP information to potential new stations and/or volunteers.

Senior Services & Community Transit (SSCT) is the local Office on Aging and is responsible for meeting the needs of older adults through the provision of programs and services, including long term care, community services, information and assistance, and transportation opportunities. SSCT manages the state-mandated senior nutrition program (congregate and home delivered meals) through the Maryland Department of Aging. SSCT, in partnership with the Cecil County Health Department and the Maryland Department of Aging, manages a Stanford University evidence-based health prevention program for community participants experiencing chronic conditions, diabetes

Narratives

and/or chronic pain. All three programs require data collection (clients or participants served; number of volunteers and hours served) and performance measurement (impact on persons served). In order to ensure compliance with RSVP federal regulations, Cecil/Harford RSVP will create an RSVP Advisory Council during the first quarter of FY 14. The Advisory Council will have an initial meeting by June 30, 2014. During the initial meeting, members will receive an overview of RSVP, current stations, and an explanation of the Primary Focus Area. The Advisory Council will meet in September to assess station progress and to identify any new potential stations; the members will also keep the sponsor and project staff aware of emerging needs within the community. To assure volunteer stations are meeting a specified community need, the RSVP Advisory Council will annually review station performance.

All individuals age 55 and older living in or nearby the community served by Cecil/Harford RSVP are invited to serve in RSVP; interested persons complete an enrollment form, verify they are 55 or older and indicate service activity interest. New volunteers are interviewed by project staff to determine an appropriate assignment from a list of RSVP stations that have the required MOU in place.

Cecil/Harford RSVP will follow all federal guidelines to ensure that no one is prevented from serving in RSVP on the basis of formal education, experience, race, religion, color, natural origin, sex, age, handicap or political affiliation.

Cecil/Harford RSVP is responsible for ensuring the appropriate use of grant funds to provide volunteers with eligible cost reimbursements, within the limits of the project's available resources. MOU agreements with stations will set annual cost reimbursements allocated for eligible mileage reimbursement and recognition activities. Cecil/Harford RSVP will ensure RSVP volunteers are provided all grant required appropriate insurance coverage. In addition, Cecil/Harford RSVP will conduct a one-time criminal background check and National Sex Offender screening on all new RSVP volunteers placed in assignments serving vulnerable populations (allocated in the grant budget narrative: 60 new volunteers @ \$15 per background check = \$900). Cecil/Harford RSVP will adhere to the Cecil County budget process system to obtain supplies and materials at the lowest cost. The RSVP Project Director's salary and benefits are the local match and are provided by Cecil County, Maryland, Department of Senior Services & Community Transit (SSCT). Cecil/Harford RSVP secures resources by way of the Cecil County budget process, which is reviewed and updated annually. As the sponsor of Cecil/Harford RSVP, SSCT does not currently secure other resources, such as cash or in-kind contributions to sustain or expand the RSVP project.

Organizational Capability

Narratives

Senior Services & Community Transit (SSCT) is one of 16 departments within Cecil County Government. SSCT has over 20 years experience in managing federal, state, local and private grants, including but not limited to: Older Americans Act Title III, Maryland Department of Aging, Federal Transit Administration, Maryland Transit Administration, and United Way. SSCT operates under the Cecil County Government financial management system, which includes annual audits and reports as indicated in the attached financial management survey. Cecil County Government and SSCT consistently follow all proper financial requirements enforced by the funder; all Cecil County Government financial staff members (including the SSCT Fiscal/Budget Analyst and the RSVP project staff) are required to attend training to ensure all federal program requirements (statutes, regulations and applicable OMB circulars), policies, and procedures are understood and followed.

Senior Services & Community Transit has over 20 years experience managing volunteer programs and 10 years experience managing impact-based programs. As the local Office on Aging, SSCT is experienced in providing diverse programs and services -- community services, long term care, senior health insurance information and assistance, transportation solutions, disability resources -- to meet the needs of a wide range of older adults. SSCT will assign one current and one grant-funded staff (as noted in the budget narrative) to devote 100% of their time developing, implementing, and overseeing Cecil/Harford RSVP. Krista Gilmore, SSCT Volunteer/Community Relations Coordinator, will function as the full-time RSVP Project Director. Her salary, provided by SSCT, will be the required match. Ms. Gilmore has 14 years of volunteer management experience and is Certified in Volunteer Administration. She has worked primarily with senior volunteers since November 2004 in her role with SSCT. As the Cecil/Harford RSVP Project Director, Ms. Gilmore will spend 100% of her time ensuring all performance measures and reporting requirements are met, creating partnerships with new stations, and marketing RSVP. Crystal Abner, Volunteer Development Associate (a full-time RSVP grant funded position), has 15 years experience in financial sales and business/community outreach. Ms. Abner will spend 40% of her time on program support (data collection and entry; budget tracking); 60% of her time will be devoted to outreach, volunteer recruitment, and station development. Debbie Ccyk, SSCT Fiscal/Budget Analyst, will devote 10% of her time in reconciling and submitting the required financial reports. Ms. Ccyk has worked for Cecil County Government for 19 years (six years in the Cecil County Treasurer's Office and 13 years with SSCT); she currently oversees 14 Federal grants and 18 State grants. Her salary (at 10%) is also part of the grant required match. Cecil/Harford RSVP project personnel will receive additional advisement and guidance from Linda Tull, SSCT Community Services Supervisor, and Alex Burkett, Harford County Government

Narratives

Department of Community Services. Ms. Tull and Ms. Burkett will serve on the RSVP Advisory Council; they will also be available to answer questions from Cecil/Harford RSVP project staff when necessary.

As a department within Cecil County Government, Senior Services & Community Transit (SSCT) is required to operate under Cecil County policies and operating procedures. Cecil County is governed by a County Executive and a five-member County Council. The Finance Office is responsible for the collection and investment of the County's funds as well as all facets of accounting. The Office of Human Resources is responsible for all personnel matters; within the office is a designated Risk Manager. The Purchasing Office centralizes all purchases and procures all necessary supplies, equipment and services at reasonable prices.

SSCT assures the Corporation that RSVP project staff will follow all internal policies in order to manage the program in compliance with local and federal regulations. Cecil County policies and operating procedures are further explained in the Financial Management Survey. Copies of the County Charter, Purchasing Code, and the Policies and Procedures Manual have been attached as required.

Senior Services & Community Transit (SSCT) follows all financial management procedures according to the policies of Cecil County Government. SSCT has extensive experience in managing federal grants. Currently the department oversees 14 federal grants and 18 state grants. The SSCT Fiscal/Budget Analyst has 13 years experience in financial management of federal grants. The SSCT Community Services Supervisor has 10 years experience in program management of state grants.

Other

n/a

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

n/a