

Narratives

Executive Summary

Hill Country Community Action Association, Inc. (HCCAA), is the sponsoring agency for Hill Country RSVP (HCRSVP). The central administrative office is in San Saba, Texas in San Saba County.

HCCAA's mission: "HCCAA is dedicated to providing opportunities and resources to improve the lives of Central Texans". The CNCS federal investment of \$110,430 will be supplemented by \$75,070 of non-federal resources made up of State, local and in-kind revenue.

There are 1,170 RSVP unduplicated volunteers currently serving the nine county rural project area with a population of 472,954 people covering 8,424 square miles (2010 census). Volunteers will meet critical community needs in Bell, Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Milam, Mills, San Saba, Llano and Mason counties, plus Ft. Hood Army Base in Killeen (pop. 405,300). The population includes 49,172 people over 65; 61,314 veterans; and 70,066 persons below the poverty level (2010 Census). The average unemployment for our 9 counties is 6.33%. The national average as of July 2013 is 7.4% (US Dept. of Labor-July 2013 report). The counties are primarily ranching, farming, agricultural communities and vary in cultural, ethnic, and economic characteristics. HCRSVP will maintain at least 1,000 required volunteers (per announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity (NOFO-TX #10), as we transition into the CNCS agency-wide priority measures. HCRSVP's primary focus area will be Healthy Futures and services will consist of (1) home delivered meals/transportation/companionship to keep the frail elderly living independent longer, (2) food banks/pantries to address food security issues for all residents, (3) disaster preparedness, (4) mentoring children and (5) clean/restore parks and trails. Volunteer managers/recruiters placed in non-profits will enable the organization to provide direct and supportive services or build capacity to provide services in other focus areas.

Strengthening Communities

- * Requirement 1. A minimum of 10% of unduplicated HCRSVP volunteers will be in the Healthy Futures work plans that result in outcomes.
- * Requirement 2. At least 25 % (782) unduplicated HCRSVP volunteers are assigned to the primary focus area in Healthy Futures and at the end of the three year grant we anticipate maintaining the current 782 volunteers and reaching 1,075 people in need.
- * Requirement 3. No more than 30% (265) of the unduplicated HCRSVP volunteers are placed in the community priorities work plan.
- * Requirement 4. The remainder of the unduplicated HCRSVP volunteers are placed in the volunteer activities aligned with other focus areas.

Narratives

** Summary of unduplicated HCRSVP Volunteers is as follows: Capacity Building: 82, Disaster Services: 11, Education: 3, Environmental Stewardship: 26, Healthy Futures: 782, Other Community Priorities: 265, and Veterans and Military Families: 1 that total to our current 1,170 unduplicated volunteer count.

> Hill Country Community Action Association, Inc. (HCCAA) has sponsored Hill Country RSVP (HCRSVP) since the fall of 1972. This is a nine county rural project with Bell County being more urban, and 8 rural counties: Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Milam, Mills, San Saba, Llano and Mason; approximately 8,424 sq. miles (2010 Census Bureau) in Central Texas which is larger than the District of Columbia, Rhode Island, Delaware, Connecticut (201 Census bureau. The population of 472,954 does not reflect the Ft Hood Military Base in Killeen with a population of 405,300 which had a growth rate of 47.19% from 2000 to 2010 (US Census Bureau). Killeen also has a large Asian/Hispanic population with a mix of dialects that often cause language, reading, writing barriers and has active military and retired populations with no family or support groups. San Saba and Coryell Counties have Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) units. San Saba, Mills and Lampasas Counties have a high concentration of children's homes and State operated emergency shelters/residences. The cities of San Saba, Goldthwaite, Mason, Cameron and Copperas Cove do not have hospitals and are served by hospitals in neighboring towns some 33+ miles away. From Mason to Scott & White Hospital in Temple that serves all the counties, the round trip of 279 miles takes 4.68 hours (Mapquest). Even though Gatesville, Lampasas and Hamilton have hospitals with emergency rooms, they do not have baby birthing-delivery capabilities. In the eight rural counties, higher education consists of limited courses either at the high schools or by satellite/internet. Even though compelling community needs vary within the nine county project, the Healthy Futures Focus Area covers the needs of the most vulnerable of our population.

> Independent Living with Meals on Wheels, transportation, companionship is a critical need in all of the nine counties. Only two counties have taxi service. The HOP, a rural public transportation system that operates in all nine counties, does not always fit the schedules of needed doctor/medical appointments, grocery store, pharmacy, bank and other errand time frame periods; so frail elderly who need transportation services rely on volunteers who furnish their own vehicles and gas/fuel to take them. Most towns only have one grocery store, pharmacy, smaller end department stores and locally owned family businesses. Through service activities such as home delivered meals, transportation and companionship for the elderly and food banks/pantries, we can measure the outcome by the number of people served who have been able to stay in their homes rather than

Narratives

assisted living or nursing homes.

> HCRSVP is an essential resource to meet community needs. Partners are established through the HCCAA Regional Board, County Advisory Groups, and clubs/organizations. To efficiently and effectively serve the large geographic area and diverse populations, each community is looked at separately; partnerships are formed based on the local community needs and available resources to include: hospitals, food banks/pantries, nursing homes, schools, Area Agency on Aging (AAA), Head Start, veteran/military families. We have 103 volunteer stations established throughout the service area and provide input, evaluation and planning of program design.

> Promoting public awareness of the project and senior volunteers will be an integral part of the Project. HCRSVP will capitalize on community/special events throughout the year by participating in health fairs and events such as Martin Luther King Day (MLK), National Volunteer Week, Older Americans Month, Make a Difference Day and September 11th (9/11) projects and local recognition events which will promote public awareness. We will also submit information for news articles and radio/TV public service announcements to draw public awareness to HCRSVP. HCRSVP utilizes local networking meetings and specific events to bring people of diverse backgrounds together. The Advisory Group will develop public relation plans for their specific area including dissemination of pamphlets, flyers and posters. Local media/publications and the Hill Country website (www.hccaa.com) will be targeted to include information about HCRSVP. Volunteers will be mobilized through HCRSVP staff, volunteer stations, volunteer manager/recruiters and local organizations to assist with local functions/special events.

> The HCRSVP program will enhance the capacity of organizations and institutions within the community in several ways: one stop shopping for people to find volunteer opportunities; capacity building for organizations through volunteer placements; keeping community volunteers organized and used more effectively; managing volunteers and providing accurate record keeping. HCRSVP volunteers will reduce costs and improve quality of services while raising awareness of the organizations. HCRSVP volunteers also bridge the gap for underfunded/understaffed programs/agencies through capacity building while meeting critical community needs or in programs/agencies that are run and supported in the 8 rural counties entirely by volunteers such as thrift stores, VFD (Volunteer Fire Departments) and EMS (Emergency Medical Services),

> Integration of senior services into the activities of other service programs within the communities will be accomplished by HCRSVP networking and building partnerships between seniors and community groups to include: hospitals, food banks/pantries, nursing homes, schools, Area Agency

Narratives

on Aging and Head Start. HCRSVP will work with senior service centers to encourage seniors to volunteer for food banks/pantries, thrift stores, children tutoring, mentoring, reading programs, and other community programs. The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) develops an area-wide plan for addressing specific issues pertaining to the elderly. HCRSVP partners with the AAA to recruit ombudsman, benefits counselors, and provide other services for the elderly that is included in their needs assessment, planning, evaluation process. Homeland security is another project where networking in the small communities is a very effective mechanism for utilizing seniors' experience and knowledge to work with area officials and the local Office of Homeland Security to be prepared in the event of hurricanes, tornadoes and other local disasters. With 61,314 retired veterans (2010 Census) and Ft. Hood Military Base in Killeen, a heavy focus will be to continue services to retired military for transportation, meals on wheels, home visits, clothes mending, companionship, thank you cards for service at the Olin E. Teague Veteran Medical Facility and domiciliary and the William R. Courtney Veteran Nursing Home in Temple. Belton has a program by one volunteer to send small thank-you cards to overseas military that might not receive mail and that has passed the 80,000-card mark. We support this program in the other 8 counties by taking stacks of cards to all recognitions and having volunteers in other counties thank them for what they do for our country, then return them to Belton to be mailed overseas. An on-base program is the wounded warrior's cookie program where volunteers bake dozens of cookies and one volunteer delivers them to the two rehabilitation (rehab) facilities for the wounded warriors when they come for therapy. We have also targeted these wounded warriors for MLK Day and Day of Caring to collaborate with Senior Centers whose participants bought tube socks and baked cookies that were delivered to the rehabs on those days. We will also utilize the "Adopt-A-Unit" military program where units/squadrons through community collaboration adopt schools and senior centers, etc., to meet whatever needs they have which have included painting, carpentry work, ramps, meals on wheels deliveries, restoration cleanup of buildings, grounds, flower beds, etc. and utilize these groups if available for MLK Day and Day of Caring for homebound residents.

Recruitment and Development

> Assuring a high quality experience for volunteers is necessary to sustain a successful volunteer service program such as HCRSVP to include: individuals from diverse races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, degrees of English proficiency and those with disabilities. Volunteer Stations will provide meaningful opportunities by matching placements with volunteer talents, knowledge and skills and offer avenues to develop new skills and abilities. The Volunteer Enrollment Form obtains background,

Narratives

skills and interest information in order to match volunteers with community needs. Volunteer skills are entered in the database, a report for special projects by skills can be run, and volunteers contacted for the assignment. Volunteers with leadership and team-building skills are encouraged to use these skills as volunteer manager/recruiters to recruit and develop other volunteers in their communities. Training for volunteers is provided by either the work station/volunteer manager recruiters or RSVP staff. Volunteers are also encouraged to participate in local trainings like disaster preparedness for their own safety. Testimonials written by volunteers give them the opportunity to reflect on their volunteer service/experience and sharing testimonials with local funding sources, setting and tracking station goals and volunteer hours, and publicizing programs and successful events are tools used to demonstrate how the volunteer contributions enhance the quality of their lives while providing meaningful service to the community.

> Methods of recruitment in rural counties include word of mouth, presentations to local groups, health fairs, radio broadcast/written media, and recruitment incentives/contests if possible; e.g.: have employees from one local bank deliver meals for 2 weeks, then challenge another bank to do the same. Local Advisory Groups will be organized with sufficient membership to designate a member to chair a committee to include: Evaluation/Nominating/Public Awareness, Recognition, Recruitment/Retainment, Volunteer Station Contact, Performance Measure strategies and goals; and special events-projects to include MLK Day, National Senior Corp Week, 9/11 and Day of Caring. This will enable the Advisory Groups to assist the project in meeting goals and objectives.

> Training and technical assistance will be provided to project staff, volunteers, volunteer station supervisors, volunteer managers/recruiters, Advisory Group members and community groups as follows:

Project Staff will receive at least one group staff training per year with one-on-one individual training and technical assistance as needed. Other staff training will include local and CNS conferences/virtual conferences, seminars, and workshops.

Volunteers will receive orientation and training by HCRSVP staff and/or volunteer station staff, volunteer manager/recruiters. Volunteers will be provided a service description/assignment that they will read and sign with a statement saying the volunteer can terminate placement or the station can terminate a volunteer placement at any time. A copy will be kept on file. Volunteers are trained based on Work- Station regulations and requirements. The training is provided by each Work-Station. Some Stations will have formalized training, such as hospitals, nursing homes, Head Start/Schools and food banks/pantries; others such as Meals on Wheels/Senior Center Activities will have less

Narratives

formal orientations to explain the processes and expectations for volunteers.

Volunteer Station Supervisors (VSS) and Volunteer Manager/Recruiters (VMR's) will receive orientation and training by HCRSVP staff and additional training as needed. Training on volunteer recruitment and retainment or local leadership training information will be provided by HCRSVP staff for VSS and VMR's. Some Stations provide their own trainings and volunteer leadership skills advancement based on the Station assignments. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be reviewed and signed by the VSS. The MOU is good for three years, but will be reviewed annually for needed updates and job assignment adjustments.

Advisory Group Members will attend an HCRSVP orientation. Each member will receive a job description and an Advisory Group Handbook which provides program information, federal regulations and prohibited activities. These tools will prepare them to advise, support and/or implement programs in areas of need or as mandated by Federal Regulations.

Community Groups will receive orientation about HCRSVP and the benefits of becoming a HCRSVP Volunteer. Presentations and networking opportunities are used as training tools. Training and technical assistance will be provided by VSS or HCRSVP staff as needed.

> Volunteer recognitions will be held annually and stations will be encouraged to hold mini recognitions throughout the year. Because of the size of the project and transportation issues, this project generally has eleven recognition events. This accommodates the majority of volunteers who could not attend a centrally located event. We collaborate with local organizations and write local grants in order to afford these events.

> The CNS staff, volunteer workstation supervisor and manager/recruiters, elected officials (City/County/State/Federal) and representatives from funding sources are invited to the events. Methodologies used for recognitions include non-negotiable checks reflecting the financial benefit gained, plaques, pins, certificates, mementos and newspaper articles

> Through volunteer separation/attrition from the program, changing community needs will transition recruited volunteers into alignment with our Focus Areas/CNCS Agency-wide priority measures. Recruiting and retaining these volunteers be ongoing to maintain the required 1,000 volunteer base.

Program Management

> HCRSVP collaborates with eligible service providers to develop Volunteer stations and service opportunities that address specific community needs. A MOU is developed for each Volunteer Station that includes a Volunteer Station Assignment Description (VSAD) and each document has regulatory

Narratives

verbiage to include prohibited activities. The Volunteer Enrollment Form (VEF) and the VSAD will reflect Focus Areas and Service Activity opportunities to ensure meaningful placement of volunteers. HCRSVP Staff provide support to Volunteer Station Managers and Recruiters by phone/email/face-to-face as needed and area meetings at least once per year. No volunteer is entered into the RSVP database without an enrollment form verifying age eligibility, signed job assignment (from signed station MOU) and first timesheet.

> Assessing volunteer performance: HCRSVP Coordinators and Advisory Groups meet on an as needed basis, but at least once per quarter. Their responsibilities include evaluating programs, goals, objectives; developing plans for improvements; organizing activities for special events/recognitions and evaluation of these events. Quantitative and qualitative measurement include monthly program reports which document statistics of active volunteers and hours and performance measure work plans that are monitored by the HCRSVP Director to ensure the project as a whole is on track. HCRSVP staff survey volunteer stations to verify program satisfaction with HCRSVP and volunteer placement and to identify opportunities for improvement. Additional surveys may be sent to funding sources, sponsor staff, and partner agencies in the community which can also be used for outcome measures.

> HCRSVP will manage information and data by maintaining a volunteer management database and tracking system for all volunteer service activities. Data entered into a volunteer management database (Volunteer Reporter-VR) will include the number of volunteers participating in Focus Areas, the number of hours served by volunteers for the service activity and the types of assignments in which volunteers served. Impact jobs are designated and tracked in the VR and reports are generated for the work plan statistics. A six-month report of the Service Activities statistics is sent to each local newspaper to publish showing where the volunteers served, number of hours and the Focus Area. Data is collected and reported monthly to the RSVP Administrative Office from stations and volunteers. The Advisory Groups and HCRSVP staff will review data on a quarterly basis. If programmatic issues are identified, the HCRSVP staff and Advisory Group will work together to develop corrective action plans with technical assistance from the Project Director.

> HCRSVP currently has 782 unduplicated volunteers working in the Healthy Futures Focus Area. All nine counties recognize this Focus Area as a community need. The HCCAA Senior Nutrition Program tracks all unduplicated clients receiving home-delivered meals and how many meals are served, so we have a detailed accurate count by county to document the number of meals delivered to the homebound elderly.

Narratives

- > The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for supervising the HCRSVP Project Director and monitoring the HCRSVP financial reports to assure both cash receipts and in-kind are documented and reported accurately. The accounting program currently uses a fund accounting software developed for non-profits that allows expenses, revenues and in-kind contributions to be recorded by grant fund. It also allows overlapping of fund years that allows financial reports and detail transaction reports to be generated by fund on the fiscal year end of each fund or by combined funds based on the fiscal year of the agency. Project reports are generated monthly by fund to be used for programmatic and financial reporting to funding sources. The accounting software allows budgets to be entered into the system by revenue, expense and in-kind line items. Budget reports generated from the system are used to measure fiscal performance against planned budgets. This helps insure efficient and effective use of available resources.
- > HCRSVP will utilize the expertise of program staff, Sponsors, Regional Board members, and Advisory Group members to secure cash and in-kind support to enhance or expand the project or support areas of specific need. The Fundraising Committee of the Advisory Group will be responsible for identifying project areas that need support and areas where expansion could improve the project's capability to address priority community needs. The Advisory Group/Fundraising Committee and the HCCAA Regional Board will assist in securing local funding to include in-kind, general contributions, United Way, Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) and other local grants. HCCAA will continue to support the program by providing office space and administrative, fiscal and accounting services.

Organizational Capability

- > HCCAA is a multi-funded agency operating numerous Federal, State and local grants/programs. The center of all these activities and different modes of delivery radiates from the HCCAA Administration offices located in San Saba. HCCAA has ten Multi-Service Centers in nine counties. HCRSVP has been sponsored by HCCAA since 1972 and currently has 103 Volunteer Stations. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has been employed by HCCAA for 36 years in various capacities including financial and administrative duties, serving as CEO since June 1996. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) has been employed since 1978. She is the direct supervisor of the HCRSVP Director and maintains oversight of the programmatic and financial aspects of HCRSVP. The HCRSVP Director has been with HCCAA since 1985 and HCRSVP Director since December, 1987.
- > HCRSVP relies on three HCRSVP Coordinators and the HCRSVP Director (3.75 Full Time Equivalent's-FTE's) amounting to 48+ years accumulated program experience. The support staff for the project: HCRSVP Director and Office Technician/Coordinator, based in San Saba that oversee

Narratives

eight counties; Temple Coordinator for all of Bell County except Killeen and a Coordinator for Killeen/Fort Hood Army Base area. All staff follows the same program plan objectives and report the same information on a monthly program Progress report that the HCRSVP Director uses for CNS. This project also utilizes the support of Advisory Group members to maintain the program's goals/objectives and adhere to program guidelines. HCCAA also has a Governing Board of Directors comprised of 34 members to whom the CEO is responsible for the operation, directions and management of the Agency.

> HCCAA has established internal financial controls that promote compliance with grant conditions, regulations, and internal policies; prevents illegal or unauthorized transactions or acts; and provides proper accounting data and information. HCCAA is audited on an annual basis by an independent accounting firm. The agency's fiscal year is from January 1 through December 31. Audits for each current fiscal year are completed in July and HCCAA has had no findings or questioned costs in the last 5 years. HCRSVP staff attends trainings/virtual conferences sanctioned by CNS to ensure that programmatic and financial regulations are kept current and understood by staff with one-on-one training by the Director.

> HCCAA is a private, non-profit corporation chartered on April 21, 1966. The total area served by HCCAA includes 18 counties and encompasses approximately 18,000 square miles. The ten Multi-Service Senior Centers operated by HCCAA serve as outreach centers for Case Management, Energy Assistance and Weatherization, as well as Senior Centers providing congregate and home delivered meals, assistance in applying for State services, budget counseling, job referrals, health screenings, form filling assistance and volunteer opportunities through HCRSVP. The Multi-Service Senior Centers in the nine county service area may be used by HCRSVP to hold meetings, set up offices, and use equipment/supplies.

> HCCAA assures the project has adequate facilities, equipment, and supplies. The purchasing procedures and personnel management support includes clearly defined roles for staff and administrators. HCCAA includes HCRSVP within the organization's structure, with clear lines of authority and responsibility. Each staff person has a job description reflecting duties specific to each position. Key management and administrative team include the CEO, CFO, Human Resource Director and Office Manager. Purchasing procedures are established in the HCCAA Procurement Policy. HCCAA administrative, personnel, and travel policies and procedures, plus specific policies and procedures for HCRSVP, are reviewed annually and revised as needed.

> Self-Assessment, evaluation and continuous improvement are on-going processes by which

Narratives

program operations will be objectively and systematically monitored and evaluated in accordance with pre-established standards. The volunteer management database (Volunteer Reporter) software will assist with evaluating progress of each performance measure. Development and implementation of plans for self-assessment and evaluation will be changed to reflect trends and/or federal regulations. Local Advisory Groups, HCCAA Regional Governing Board, Volunteer Testimonials and individual input from volunteers are also ongoing systems for self-assessment, evaluation and continuous improvement.

> Q21. The volunteer Advisory Council in 1987 voted out reimbursable transportation to individual volunteers, because of the size of the project and cost to budget. They decided the money should be utilized in other areas of program support. Volunteers know they will furnish their own transportation/fuel costs when they enroll. This issue has been brought up periodically by the HCRSVP Director at Advisory Group (Council) meetings and the answer by the volunteers is still the same. The project always seeks reimbursable transportation costs or discount vouchers in areas that have public bus transportation, which would be Bell County.

Other

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

RSVP DIRECTOR NARRATIVE

Total no. of Active RSVP volunteers: _____

2. Total no. of volunteer hours: _____

**STATISTICS: (Month)_____--- (Day_____, (Year)

_____ hours of service at _____ volunteer stations with volunteers performing _____ job assignments

**The age groups of volunteers are:

55-69 -- _____

70-79 -- _____

80-89 -- _____

90-94 -- _____

95-99 -- _____

100-104 - _____

_____ being the average age of these volunteers

_____ females

_____ males

>>_____ - Total number of jobs served by volunteers

Narratives

___ - Average number of jobs served by volunteer

___ - Greatest number of jobs served by a single volunteer

___ - Smallest number of jobs served by a single volunteer

**Annual Hours Served by volunteers:

_____ vol. - Under 260 Hours (4 or fewer hrs/wk)

_____ vol. -- 260-520 Hours (5- 10 hrs/wk)

_____ vol. -- 520-1040 Hours (11-19 hrs/wk)

_____ vol. -- 1040-1560 Hours (20-29 hrs/wk)

_____ vol. - Over 1560 Hours (30 or more hrs/wk)

RESOURCES DEVELOPED/ACCOMPLISHED:

>>Bell Co./Temple-Belton:

>>Coryell Co./Gatesville:

>>Hamilton Co.:

>>Lampasas Co.:

>>Milam Co.:

>>Mills Co.:

>>San Saba Co.:

>>Mason Co.:

>>Llano Co.:

>> In-Kind for ALL 9 Counties: Received in-kind contributions for space costs, meals and recognition events for all counties for volunteer/program/station support: _____

Volunteer Testimonials: _____

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A