

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

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The Madison County Office for the Aging (MCOFA) will have an estimated 130 volunteers to serve during the grant period. Service activities will include transportation program drivers, food pantry assistance, leading or assisting Bone Builders as well as recruitment and providing volunteer management training.

The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures. The grant will assist with meeting health needs within Madison County including access to care, aging in place and nutrition. Activities will include supporting the ability of homebound, older adults and individuals with disabilities to live independently and assisting individuals with access to food resources. These activities will mirror the core principles identified by CNCS which are to identify and invest in community solutions; engage Americans in service; support evidence based programs and leverage public-private partnerships.

In addition to the focus areas described above, funds will be used to support capacity building activities provided by national service participants. These are indirect services that will enable MCOFA to provide more, better and sustained direct services. Capacity building activities include recruitment and management of community volunteers.

At the end of the three-year grant, an estimated 425 senior citizens and 365 economically disadvantaged individuals (unduplicated) in Madison County will receive services that allow them to live independently and experience increased household food security, increased social ties and perceived social support. The CNCS federal investment of \$43,438 will be supplemented by \$88,644 non-federal resources.

## Strengthening Communities

Madison County, population 73,365; size 655 sq. miles, is located in the center of New York State. Primarily rural in nature, Madison County boasts rolling hills, a beautiful agricultural landscape and at least twenty lakes and ponds for recreation. Madison County lies equidistant between Utica (30 miles east) and Syracuse (30 miles west) just off the New York State thruway. The primarily white (96.4%) rural population resides in a number of small towns and villages with only one small city, Oneida, population 10,000. The main form of transportation is single-family automobile. According

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to 2010 census data, 68% of workers drive a car alone to their place of employment. On May 30, 2013 the Madison County Government eliminated the county-wide public transportation system. This has resulted in a barrier for senior citizens and disabled individuals to travel to medical or other necessary appointments.

Madison County has suffered significant losses in its manufacturing and agriculture base during the economic downturn. The Madison County unemployment rate as of March 2012 was 9.2% up from 8.2% in 2009. (2010 US Census data) Over the past two decades, several major employers and manufacturers in the Central New York State region have left the area, gone out of business or downsized, resulting in a significant loss of manufacturing jobs that have historically provided local workers with satisfactory earnings potential over a lifetime. NYS Department of Labor statistics for the Central New York region reflect a net decline of 16,400 jobs in the Goods Producing sector for the period from 1990 to 2007, with 11,500 (70%) of these job losses occurring since 2000. Local job growth has been primarily in the service area, with lower wages and irregular work hours typical for such positions.

Madison County continues to slip farther and farther behind as many in the younger workforce with skills and education leave the area for better opportunities elsewhere. Of Madison County's 70,000 plus residents 14% are over age 65. (2010 US Census data) Madison County's senior citizens need support services such as transportation and health education programs to help them stay healthy, maintain independence and age in place. Community needs are stretching local non-profit organizations to their maximum capacity. In addition, according to the 2010 census data, 9.8% of Madison County's population (7,189) lives below the poverty level. Many are underemployed or unemployed with families who have long term needs that require assistance. Consequently, these residents may have to utilize local food pantries to ensure food security for themselves and their families.

Through this grant, MCOFA would hire an RSVP Project Director that would build strong relationships with the two volunteer transportation programs in Madison County, one of which is administered by the MCOFA and the Community Resources for Independent Seniors (CRIS) program. RSVP volunteers would assist Madison County communities by engaging and providing trained volunteers to enhance the capacity of under-resourced non-profits so they can carry out their

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missions. With the RSVP Grant, MCOFA would train volunteers to staff food pantries as well as having the members of the "Madison County Living Well Partnership" which provides regular networking meetings for food pantry volunteers. Volunteers will be supported with a mileage reimbursement program, supplemental liability insurance and an annual volunteer recognition event. In a comprehensive survey conducted by researchers from Arizona State and Cleveland State University and cited in Volunteer Administration Professional Practice (June 2010), "recognition activities have the largest positive effect on retention of any of the volunteer management practices asked about in the survey".

The grant funding will be used to directly manage the Osteoporosis prevention and health education program, "Bone Builders". This is an evidence-based health education and exercise program developed at Tufts University. MCOFA will provide support to certify that "Train the Trainer" sessions are available for new volunteers. In addition, regular visits will be made to each of the weekly exercise and health education sessions currently led by volunteers throughout the county. MCOFA will provide ongoing training and administrative office support for medical clearance and attendance tracking logs for the Bone Builder volunteers and liability insurance for all the volunteers. All three of these activities; food pantries, transportation services and the Bone Builders health education programs are effectively managed through the use of staff supervisors, handicapped accessible sites, and convenient hours of operation.

Service activities in the Primary Focus Area leading to National Performance Measure outputs or outcomes include transportation services demonstrated by number of older adults and individuals with disabilities receiving transportation services that allow them to live independently leading to increased social ties/perceived social support; food pantry support demonstrated by the number of individuals receiving emergency food from food banks leading to increased household food security; and leading or assisting Bone Builders demonstrated by number of clients participating in this health education program. Service activities for volunteer drivers in the transportation program include pickup and delivery of seniors and disabled individuals to medical and other appointments and activities necessary for independent living. Service activities for the food pantries include stocking shelves and helping clients choose locally grown (in season) fresh foods that are nutritionally adequate and safe. Bone Builder leaders demonstrate and lead participants through exercises that include weight bearing, strength training and balance exercises. Service activities also include weekly nutrition

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and healthy lifestyle information education sessions, management of paperwork related to the program and assistance with setup up for the exercise sessions and providing general support as needed for each group.

As stated previously, 9.8% of Madison County's population lives below the poverty level. Consequently, these 7,189 residents may have to utilize local food pantries to ensure food security for themselves and their families. In addition, according to the 2010 US Census, 14% of Madison County's 73,365 residents are over age 65. Due to the lack of public transportation services and the aging population in Madison County, a viable transportation program is needed for senior citizens. The grant will ensure RSVP Volunteers serve as drivers and escorts to senior citizens needing transportation to medical and other necessary appointments helping seniors maintain independence and social support so they can age in place. According to the 2013 Madison County senior needs survey conducted by MCOFA health care and medical costs were the top two issues identified by seniors as their areas of greatest need. The Bone Builders exercise education program addresses this need by helping prevent senior health issues related to Osteoporosis, slips and falls and depression. The goal is for seniors to stay healthy, maintain independence and age in place.

### **Recruitment and Development**

MCOFA will provide professional development training and opportunities for volunteers. MCOFA plans to offer workshops designed with input from volunteers to appeal to their interests and help enhance the quality of their lives. Marketing for these workshops will be accomplished through the MCOFA newsletter, announcements to registered volunteers, and via membership in various county-wide non-profit consortiums and collaborations. For this grant application MCOFA plans to continue providing opportunities for volunteers to reflect on the meaning of service through a relationship with Clear Path for Veterans, Colgate University, Morrisville State College, and Community Resources for Independent Seniors and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

MCOFA will provide one-on-one placement and orientation to individual volunteers depending on volunteer interest. MCOFA will support organizational partners as they train new volunteers. MCOFA will provide facilitation and support for the food pantry network volunteer meetings that are the infrastructure for dissemination of ongoing information on food safety, healthy food donations and the need for household food security. MCOFA will hold a "Train the Trainer" session using Tufts University evidence-based exercise program, Bone Builders as new volunteers are added to the

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program as well as an annual update training for current Bone Builders exercise leaders including guest speakers on topics such as Osteoporosis, falls prevention and gerontology issues. MCOFA will provide orientation and training support for new volunteer drivers in the Community Resources for Independent Living (CRIS) Program in addition to MCOFA volunteer transportation program.

MCOFA intends to provide technical assistance to volunteer stations and provide up to date orientation materials and volunteer handbooks. MCOFA is a member of the Volunteer Services Alliance (VSA) for Madison County. The VSA is an association driven primarily by volunteers for those who provide networking and educational programs to agencies that utilize volunteers. MCOFA intends to promote volunteerism and volunteer development through organizational management tools and training in cooperation with VSA. MCOFA will draw on the talents of specially trained volunteers, local colleges, the outreach educators of Cornell University, Colgate University, Morrisville State College and Cazenovia College as well as other organizations to present topics of interest to RSVP volunteers, volunteer station supervisors, and community participation groups.

MCOFA will recruit volunteers through various means including press releases, radio, public television, targeted mailing, presentations to community groups, brochures and flyers, Volunteer Match and our website: [www.ofamadco.org](http://www.ofamadco.org). This wide array of methods helps insure that MCOFA recruits a volunteer pool reflective of a diverse group of volunteers including those of all races, ethnicity, and levels of English language proficiency as well as veterans. In addition, MCOFA will promote volunteerism and support community service efforts through its relationship with the Alternative, Resources, Choices (ARC of Madison County) and United Cerebral Palsy (UCP), both are programs for cognitively and developmentally challenged individuals who currently volunteer for MCOFA programs. MCOFA plans to update its marketing materials to reflect the CNCS primary focus area of Healthy Futures and the six complementary focus areas in preparation for the upcoming grant cycle and disseminate these materials at the Madison County Office Building, YMCA, churches, and local businesses.

Management level retirees and those with professional backgrounds will be recruited through community networking and corporate volunteer programs. MCOFA We will continue to offer meaningful experiences for newer RSVP members that correlate to their higher levels of education, technical ability, and professional training through Days of Service projects. Recruitment of veterans

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and military families eligible to volunteer with RSVP will be accomplished through the Madison County Office of Veterans Affairs and Veterans of Foreign War organizations. Current volunteers who are veterans will be identified through the Volunteer Reporter database and asked to participate in the Clear Path for Veterans program as leaders and assistants. Individuals with age-related disabilities will be recruited through Adult Day programs and area nursing homes.

MCOFA will encourage retention through thank you cards, phone calls, station visits to inquire whether jobs meet expectations, verbal expressions of appreciation, volunteer recognition events, and community recognition through press releases and profile articles in the local media. MCOFA will encourage and assist the efforts of organizational partners to recognize volunteers by attending their recognition events and contributing gifts and certificates of appreciation when possible. MCOFA will hold an annual recognition event to honor and recognize the volunteers of the importance and impact of the work they do. MCOFA will post project achievements on our website and our Facebook page in order to recognize the work of RSVP volunteers.

### **Program Management**

MCOFA's plan and infrastructure related to compliance exists in the form of a comprehensive in-house set of by-laws for the Board of Directors as well as policies and procedures are required by the New York State Office for the Aging and the Administration on Aging. MCOFA will have volunteer stations complete a Memorandum of Understanding stipulating their agreement with critical volunteer management guidelines defined in a Policy & Procedure Manual such as safety for volunteers, prohibition of discrimination, accessibility, and reasonable accommodations for disabled individuals. MCOFA's infrastructure provides locked files for volunteer records to ensure confidentiality.

MCOFA will adhere to volunteer eligibility and pre-assignment requirements through the volunteer application procedure which documents volunteer age, veteran status and volunteer interest. Volunteers will receive a personalized assignment description and a volunteer handbook upon entry into the program. MCOFA will visit volunteer stations to ensure compliance with safety, training and other regulations. A clear volunteer service termination policy is will be outlined in the volunteer handbook.

MCOFA will conduct a county-wide volunteer needs assessment to identify community needs outside

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the primary focus area, some of which might fit in the environmental area, economic opportunity and capacity building. MCOFA plans to approach those organizations that do not already have a current Memorandum of Understanding to determine the need for volunteers to help build capacity in these areas.

MCOFA will adapt performance measure surveys from the National Service Knowledge Network for the Healthy Futures primary focus areas for aging in place and obesity and food. The community-based mentoring service area will also utilize the performance measure survey recommended by the knowledge network. Intake log sheets for veterans and military families will be developed. Tracking tools for Complimentary Focus Areas and Capacity Building will be designed by the RSVP Project Director. Surveys will be disseminated to recipients of service at the volunteer station face-to-face, via E-mail or U.S. postal service where appropriate.

The MCOFA Executive Director and Finance Manager are responsible for the financial accountability and cost effective use of grant funds and in-kind resources. MCOFA financial practices are audited annually and financial statements of operations and activities is presented to the MCOFA Board of Directors and reviewed at each meeting. A thorough review of the proposed annual budget is conducted by the MCOFA Executive Director, the MCOFA Board of Directors Finance Committee and Finance Manager to ensure effective use of project resources. MCOFA intends to provide insurance and reimburse volunteers for mileage costs to and from the volunteer station. MCOFA will provide background checks as required by NCNS.

### **Organizational Capability**

Since 1977, the Office for the Aging has offered services to senior citizens and their families in order to allow many to remain at home as productive citizens in their own communities. The agency is a private not-for-profit Area Agency on Aging governed by a Board of Directors. There are 30 programs offered to Madison County residents aged 60 and over, many of which are frail and isolated. The agency is funded by the US Administration on Aging, the New York State Office for the Aging, Madison County, and local contributions.

Currently the Office for the Aging has 6,429 names on our database. These names consist of clients, caregivers, and persons requesting information and receiving services from our office. In Madison County, the Office for the Aging is the only agency that provides services specifically to the elderly and

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their caregivers. Additionally, we are the only agency in the county that provides; a congregate and home delivered meal program, in-home services for the elderly program, home dialer program, Handyman and home helper referral lists, volunteer insurance counselors, friendly visitors, caregiver support and a grandparent support group.

Theresa Davis, Executive Director has a Master's in Public Administration and has been employed by MCOFA for 27 years. Her responsibilities include supervising 30 employees; administer, plan, develop, coordinate and direct the service programs and activities; public education, contracting, monitoring, develop and administer the area plan on aging. Coordinate 30 services and programs; maintaining budget requirements; coordinate volunteers. Coordinate annual fund drive and fund raising events, grant research, and grant writing. Advocating for senior citizen issues on local, state, and federal level. Expand programs; report program services evaluate and assess the needs of older persons as well as evaluate the effectiveness of contract agencies and other organizations serving older persons in addition to other various administrative duties.

### **Other**

MCOFA intends to recruit and place volunteers and conducting performance measurement in the Healthy Futures focus areas of Aging in Place-Transportation Services, Obesity and Food-Food Pantry Support and Bone Builders. MCOFA has a 36 year track record or coordinating volunteers, volunteer recruitment, management and retention.

MCOFA owns and operates its own office space, including a central kitchen and meals on wheels program and employs 31 staff. MCOFA is governed by a Board of Directors and is governed by the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA). MCOFA staff follows a travel policy approved by the MCOFA Board of Directors ensuring IRS requirements regarding an "accountability plan", including that all travel expenses have a business connection, documentation of mileage and any excess reimbursement or travel advance must be returned to the association. Mileage rate is equal to the IRS standard mileage rate.

MCOFA has a fully implemented accounting software package that addresses the needs of fund-based grants and contracts. Extensive policies and procedures are in place through the agency. An independent audit is completed each year that analyzes financial data and makes recommendations to ensure that the integrity of the financial management system is not compromised. MCOFA has

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significant successful experience in federal grant management. Since 1977, MCOFA has managed a federal grant United State Administration on Aging as well as New York State Office for the Aging. Total agency funding for 2013 is 1.2 million dollars.

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

This is not applicable