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Executive Summary

RSVP Volunteer Center of Manitowoc County has been in existence for over 40 years. United Way Manitowoc County, Inc. would like the opportunity to be the new sponsoring agency for this program. The primary focus area for RSVP in this grant application is Education with workplan objectives in the areas of K-12 success and school readiness. United Way sees education as the key to reducing problems of poverty, illiteracy, hunger and malnutrition, lack of affordable housing, unemployment, and more in Manitowoc County. A quality education is a fundamental building block for a good life and critical to obtaining a stable job that provides enough income to support a family through retirement, and good health. RSVP volunteers will be serving in 7 public schools to provide reading assistance to children who lag behind their classmates because they cannot read well. The gap between children who read well and those who do not increases over time. Early intervention is the key to improving the reading skills of these students. United Way will support the recruitment of 90 RSVP volunteers who will tutor 150 high risk students in reading. At the end of the three-year grant, 120 students will have improved academic performance in literacy as evidenced by their reading proficiency scores. In addressing school readiness, RSVP Volunteers will be recruited to assist the Head Start program provide high quality early learning intervention in reading to at risk children ages 3-4. United Way will support the recruitment of 15 RSVP volunteers who will tutor 40 high risk children in reading. At the end of the three-year grant, 35 children will have improved academic performance in literacy by at least 15% over their pre-test scores. A total of 105 unduplicated RSVP volunteers of the 255 unduplicated total will be serving in the Education focus area. The annual requested federal grant amount for this program serving the residents of Manitowoc County is \$64,868 which will be supplemented by \$31,112 non-federal sources.

Strengthening Communities

RSVP Volunteer Center serves Manitowoc County, Wisconsin located on the western shore of Lake Michigan in southeastern Wisconsin. The county has an estimated population of 80,671 residents. The majority (92.2%) of the population is non-Hispanic white; the largest minority population is Hispanic (3.3%), followed by Asian (2.6%), mostly Hmong. Like much of the nation, Manitowoc County's population is aging. There are an estimated 14,359 adults over the age of 65, which is 17.8% of the population. The growing aging population affords RSVP a plentiful source of volunteers for the present and future. The economy is a mix of agriculture, light and heavy industry, service sector jobs, and tourism. The largest agri-business is dairy farming, with nearly 100,000 cows calling Manitowoc

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County home. In the last 10 years, the number of large manufacturing employers with high pay and benefits has reduced while the number of large dairy operations with non-family employees, lower wages and limited benefits has increased. Unemployment is currently at 7.1% leaving 3,179 residents out of work.

Within the next 10 years, the number of persons age 65 and older will be greater than those age 5 and younger. Baby Boomers started turning 65 in January of 2011. Since that time, approximately 9,000 of them turned 65 every day and this will continue for the next 20 years. Between 2010 and 2020, Manitowoc County is on pace to increase the 65 and older age group by 23%. (Source: UW-Cooperative Extension, 2012) The impact of this aging population on Manitowoc County could result in social issues related to increased need for family caregiving, housing and transportation to name a few. It is critical that communities empower seniors to remain active, independent and engaged in their community through programs like RSVP. RSVP is viewed as a positive resource for seniors in Manitowoc County to volunteer their time and continue to give back to their community through-out their retirement years.

RSVP Volunteer Center of Manitowoc County has determined that Education will be the primary focus area. This determination was made based on the needs identified by a collaborative group formed by the United Way called the Community Partnership for Children (CPC). CPC is made up of community leaders from various sectors of education, business, non-profit, civic and community members focused on the common vision of success for Manitowoc County's children from cradle to career through skilled planning and targeted action. CPC has identified the following information: 1) 61% of children in our county are not reading proficiently by the end of 3rd grade. 2) 17% of children in our county are living in poverty. 3) Births to women less than age 20: 27 births/1,000 women. By engaging students in learning while in school, they are more likely to be successful and motivated students that continue to show progress. Placing an emphasis on valuing the importance of involving families in their child's learning from early childhood through college or work transitions has long-lasting effects for our community. CPC is working to create a community web of social, cultural, educational and economic resources to support students outside of the school environment. Our collaboration of leaders works together to support student success and build a community of strong systems that is focused on our children from cradle to career. The group also sets and monitors large-scale community wide goals for achieving outcomes in the area of education.

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Much work needs to be done to improve educational outcomes and assess future areas of focus. CPC intends to complete a needs assessment related to educational goals and community data within the next year. This report will serve as a catalyst for educating and advocating for the future success of our children. Through data-driven plans and specific benchmarks, CPC will engage community leaders and hold educational systems accountable in meeting established goals. Simply put, the United Way's Community Partnership for Children is a call to action to coordinate services and programs strategically to meet the needs of Manitowoc County's children and make a difference in moving the needle on education.

Currently, Seventy percent or 1,249 students in grades K-3 in just the Manitowoc Public School District (MPDS) could not read proficiently in 2012-13 within their respective grade level and 19% (339) of the students were only reading at the minimal level. Our proposal for K-12 success seeks to improve 80% of the target students' academic performance in literacy by at least 15%. To ensure our success, RSVP will work in collaboration with the volunteer stations toward achieving the desired outcomes in the primary focus area. Each Volunteer Station involved in a primary focus area will meet with RSVP at least twice each year to review objectives, service activities and outcomes.

Furthermore, there are nearly 8,000 functionally illiterate adults residing in Manitowoc County. These adults are unable to use printed and written information to function in society, achieve their goals, or to develop their knowledge and potential. The Adult R.E.A.D. program is an innovative reading program that directly addresses an unmet literacy need among disadvantaged low-income adults with learning disabilities (LD). The R.E.A.D. program uses a multisensory, phonics-based tutoring method that works especially well for individuals with LD. The brain pathways used for reading and spelling must be developed using multisensory learning including sound, sight, touch, rhythm, and movement simultaneously in order to learn, process, retain, and retrieve information. The program's tutoring instruction is based on a proven multisensory method, the Orton-Gillingham (O-G) Approach developed by Dr. Samuel Terry Orton (mid-1920's) and Ms. Anna Gillingham (Alphabetic Method, a teaching manual, 1936) which utilizes many of these learning pathways in the brain.

R.E.A.D. uses volunteer tutors, in lieu of educational professionals paid \$25-\$35 per hour. By offering

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these services at no cost we are able to prevent a financial barrier to enrolling. It is individualized and strength-based to meet the unique needs of adult LD students. In addition, the frequency of tutoring sessions gives both the tutors and students an opportunity to get to know each other and bond in mutual friendship, respect and trust. Over time, focusing on strengths helps increase student self-esteem and builds self-confidence, a quality employers seek. Today, literacy is an essential employment skill. "Improved literacy (also) makes employees less vulnerable to lay-off and displacement and, for those who are unemployed, better equipped to find new jobs (Bloom et al., 2001)." Tutors also serve as positive adult role models. By engaging the students, they learn effective ways to communicate and relate with others including family members, employers and co-workers.

Within Manitowoc County there is an emphasis to make programs and services available equally to all who are eligible. As such, veterans and military family members are identified in the intake process when that status would provide additional or other services available to them.

Recruitment and Development

The RSVP program will provide an individualized orientation and placement process with each new volunteer. Along with an orientation to RSVP, a review of individual skills, interest and availability is done in coordination with the volunteer opportunities which meet those criteria. Individuals choose the volunteering they would like to become involved with and a referral is made to the respective station with the expectation that the volunteer is contacted within one week to begin the process. RSVP volunteers are expected to be ambassadors for volunteerism in our community. Volunteers will also be recruited to lead projects with the RSVP program and at stations in capacity building activities. These opportunities provide meaningful work and skill development opportunities for the volunteer.

Each new volunteer station will be expected to complete an MOU when they become affiliated with RSVP Volunteer Center which will require that they provide orientation, training and supervision for each RSVP volunteer to successfully perform the duties of their assignment. Volunteers will be contacted within 6 weeks of being referred to a station for a volunteer position. This contact provides an opportunity to assess if the training and orientation of the new volunteer is occurring as required. It also provides an opportunity to answer questions or deal with any concerns the RSVP volunteer has in regard to their new assignment. Gaps in training or problems identified with the volunteer assignment will require steps be taken to remedy the situation.

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RSVP Volunteer Center is committed to providing volunteer opportunities to all persons 55+ which focus on volunteer placements which are a good fit for their talents, experience and abilities in coordination with community needs. In the past, RSVP has made a special effort to work in collaboration with community agencies such as the schools, nursing homes, food pantries, hospitals, Wellness Center, YMCA, Holiday House, Aging & Disability Resource Center and others who work with minority populations to ensure opportunities for participation in the program. RSVP also brings together people of diverse backgrounds through participation in the Multicultural Consortium and other outreach efforts. The Consortium serves as a resource and catalyst for diversity, promoting cultural exchange, social unity, and equal opportunity. The group is well represented by Hmong and Hispanic. RSVP will also strive to provide representation from minority populations to serve on the Advisory Council.

RSVP will actively promote and recruit all persons 55+ through community presentations, newspaper articles and events with a special emphasis on those opportunities involving older adults. Veterans and military family members will be recruited in this manner along with the general public. The United Way believes every interaction with an RSVP volunteer should involve an expression of appreciation and recognition of the importance of their volunteer service. The RSVP Volunteer Center intends to make personal phone calls to volunteers on their birthday as a way of extending our appreciation. This contact also provides an opportunity to discuss the volunteer's participation in RSVP and any questions or concerns they may have. The United Way values volunteer's time and skills in the same regard as if they were a major financial donor. RSVP Volunteer Center will hold an annual volunteer recognition luncheon event during National Volunteer Week every year. All active RSVP volunteers will be invited to attend free of charge.

Program Management

Each Volunteer Station will be required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreeing to the terms and conditions of being part of the RSVP Volunteer Center program in Manitowoc County. The MOU will include sections on the responsibilities of the RSVP program and those of the Volunteer Station. There will also be a section on the basic provisions of the RSVP program which provide guidance on religious and political activities, prohibition of discrimination, displacement of employees and other program requirements. To ensure and reinforce compliance by Volunteer Stations, an annual meeting will be held with representatives to review the MOU, answer questions and reinforce positive volunteer management practices. We will also ensure Volunteer Stations are providing a safe

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working environment for volunteers that is accessible for persons with disabilities. RSVP will communicate with all Volunteer Stations through a quarterly newsletter which will reinforce the RSVP program regulations and operating procedures.

RSVP will utilize a number of practices which promote recruitment and management of volunteers outside the primary focus area. When a new RSVP Volunteer is enrolled, part of the orientation process will include an overview of the volunteer opportunities available in the unmet community needs. This creates an awareness which is helpful to the individual volunteer in choosing their volunteering. Knowledge of community needs is also valuable information when talking with others about volunteering.

RSVP has a distribution of Volunteer Stations and RSVP Volunteers which fortunately align well with the parameters of the new performance measure requirements. We realize there will be a need to make some adjustments in Volunteer Stations or the assignment of RSVP Volunteers to better address community needs going forward. Volunteer Stations which may no longer be part of RSVP will still have access to many services which support their recruitment and management of volunteers through the United Way Volunteer Center. The combination of a quarterly newsletter and awareness by United Way Manitowoc County both help to promote an understanding of where and why volunteering in the areas of unmet community needs is so critical. RSVP will meet with those Volunteer Stations which are responsible for outcomes and outputs at least twice each year to ensure there is a plan in place to measure and collect the data required.

RSVP Volunteer Center is administered by the United Way Manitowoc County as the sponsoring agency. Within that responsibility the Board of Directors and its committees provide the primary fiscal and operational oversight. The RSVP Advisory Council will have the primary responsibility of ensuring that the RSVP program is effectively addressing community needs and is providing a meaningful volunteer experience for the RSVP volunteers.

RSVP will utilize the Volgistics software to efficiently manage individual RSVP volunteer, volunteer station and cumulative program data. Volgistics allows for efficient data management and is able to generate the reports needed to fulfill the requirements of CNCS and the United Way. Project resources are managed closely by the following accepted procedures. A separate set of income and expense

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accounts will be used for the RSVP program. Monthly statements of expenses and revenues are generally available within two weeks after the end of each month. The United Way Executive Director and RSVP Director will review these statements monthly. The United Way Board will review monthly statements on at least a bi-monthly basis. To ensure effective and efficient use of resources there are several internal controls in place. Office purchases must be authorized by the Executive Director in advance and are made by one staff person who orders only what is needed. There is also an office procedure and spreadsheet which is used to track the receipt of any in-kind resources. Because the majority of expenses are salary and benefit costs, these expenditures are carefully reviewed annually by the United Way Executive Director and Personnel Committee. Committee members are knowledgeable human resource staff in area businesses. They ensure compensation is competitive and within yearly budget constraints. Highly experienced staff who are committed team players and detail oriented are our greatest strength. This ensures the processes and policies are implemented accurately and consistently.

Organizational Capability

United Way Manitowoc County, Inc. (UWMC) is the ideal agency to continue as the sponsor of the RSVP program because not only does the program fit with our purpose to mobilize volunteers for the greater good, but also because of our reputation for exceptional program delivery and accountability. The UWMC has been a partner and long-time financial supporter of the existing RSVP program sponsored by Holy Family Memorial, Inc. (HFM). Recently, HFM determined the RSVP Volunteer Center provides an essential service to the community but was not core to the operations of HFM. After a carefully planned review, stakeholder discussions and interviews, HFM decided UWMC was most directly aligned with the goals of this volunteer placement service. The United Way is committed to the services the RSVP Volunteer Center provides and will continue to strategically recruit and place volunteers to assist in delivery of essential human services throughout Manitowoc County.

UWMC has a long-standing history of successfully managing volunteers including seniors and impact-based programming. UWMC is run cost effectively because policy, board structure and operational support is all provided by the United Way organization staff and program staff is able to focus on program delivery, data collection and outcomes. UWMC is a great fit for RSVP.

Policies and fiscal oversight is provided by an experienced and knowledgeable staff and a strong board

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of directors. For 84 years, UWMC has served Manitowoc County and has earned the respect and confidence of hundreds of businesses, organizations and donors. UWMC has board policies which are reviewed annually, internal control policies and an employee handbook. Committees with local experts include, Impact Committee, Personnel Committee and a Finance Committee. Volunteers are very willing to assist United Way with any policy questions relating to legal, financial, insurance or employee issues. United Way Worldwide requires minimum annual certification terms as well as a self-assessment every three years. We have always met all requirements and expectations of our funders and national organization.

Our computer hardware and software is invested in regularly and kept current. These software programs and resources allow collecting data and reporting to be implemented easily by program staff. Currently, we are in the process of implementing new software which will automate and track impact and we are expecting to implement standardized outcomes within the next year.

UWMC is managed by an experienced staff that holds significant respect in the community. The Executive Director is in her 1st year with UWMC but has holds extensive experience in program delivery in several services areas throughout her career. She is the former Resident Services Director of Felician Village overseeing the use of Medicare dollars and managed their volunteer program which housed over 35+ seniors. The RSVP Program Director is in her 18th year of managing the RSVP program and is an experienced volunteer manager with a degree in psychology and human development. She has worked in the field of human services for 33 years including managing a home care service and a supported employment program for adults with severe developmental disabilities. The Operations Manager has over 13 years of private and public accounting experience which includes the management of A-133 audits of non-profits and local governments. All staff have detailed job descriptions that clearly reflect duties and responsibilities. United Way staff work as a team and all members value the contribution the current RSVP program makes to the community. In terms of how staff will be sustained, the longevity and reputation of UWMC is strong. In a time of tight fiscal budgets, funding has become more diverse to include grants from foundations, sponsorships from businesses and fund raising events.

United Way has a proven track record in the community for addressing community needs in the priority focus areas as well as managing volunteers and measuring outcomes. United Way facilitates

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the process for community groups to come together to complete an assessment about community indicators as a way to set priorities. UWMC was the facilitator and brought a group of community members together to address access to mental health. HFM, Aurora, Manitowoc County Health Department and United Way in collaboration with Healthiest Manitowoc County completed a health needs assessment earlier this year to measure improvements and identify current health risks for our county. The report includes a community survey and measures 72 indicators locally compared to state and national data. The priorities identified in this report released in 2013 correlate to the Focus Areas that RSVP has identified. These include the areas of Income (basic needs -- housing and employment); Health (priority of obesity) and Education (school readiness and school success). As a result of the 2010 Joint Healthiest Manitowoc County -- United Way Community Assessment, Healthy Growth and Development Prenatal to 5 and School Age and Adolescence were identified as a community priority. Work on this community priority, with the focus of prenatal to age five, began with a collaborative team that included Lakeshore CAP, CESA7 Head Start-Early Head Start, Health Department, Human Services Department, Aurora Health Care and Holy Family Memorial, Inc. UWMC lead the effort to expand the initiative of school readiness and success. In 2011, the United Way invited leaders of community organizations with an interest in early childhood and presented information on the status of resources available in the community for early childhood and parenting. The United Way invited these stakeholders to participate in the creation of the Community Partnership for Children of Manitowoc County. The United Way's vision was to create an integrated community system dedicated to achieving a healthy future for all children in Manitowoc County. This Vision Council identifies needs and gaps and a plan to address them. A few things accomplished since CPC began include -- creation of a Welcome Baby program which provides welcome baby visits to all first time parents before leaving the hospital, creation of a Breast Feeding Taskforce which provides education at time of birth to all expectant parents on the benefits of breast feeding as it relates to brain development, and an Early Screening Sub-Committee which provides education to doctors, nurses, parents and educational staff on the early detection of disabilities in children.

The RSVP program would be greatly valued by the United Way because it creates a greater collaboration to address community goals. No one organization or funding alone can make needed changes on things like the financial stability of families and access to health care without first addressing the educational needs of our children. Volunteers are a key resource that are mobilized through United Way and RSVP working together. The connections United Way has with community

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needs and with businesses, organizations and volunteers compliments the work of RSVP. United Way estimates over 2,000 volunteers are involved with its work. This ranges from projects implemented by our Women's Leadership Council, to committee work, to fundraising and events. For example, our Women's Leadership Council will be volunteering their time to purchase and install a Born Learning Trail for children and parents at a local zoo in Manitowoc County during early October 2013. Based on the latest early childhood research and approved by national early learning experts through United Way of America, the Board Learning Trail is designed to help adults interact with children to boost language and literacy development and to help caregivers understand how to best support early learning in outdoor everyday moments. Hundreds of hours will be given to this project to make a difference in our community and children's lives. During the coming year, UWMC will also see the creation of two critical groups including Emerging Leaders and a Student United Way. Members would come together to network, connect with other peers and leaders in the community, build leadership skills, and learn about the issues in our community and how to make a difference. In 2014, UWMC will acquire from HFM the local Volunteer Center which provides volunteer opportunities to individuals under the age of 55. In recent years the United Way has been the only funding source for the Volunteer Center.

United Way is focused on making an impact on issues for the long-term and does so both by establishing goals, measuring program outcomes and by working toward community level change. We offer training for organizations and opportunities to work together to establish outcomes and measures to show success.

UWMC has an experienced and knowledgeable staff who will work with volunteers and create a positive place for people to come together to make a difference in the community. This strong connection to agencies, community groups and employers enable us to effectively house RSVP. By having the program housed together with the Volunteer Center there is increased capacity to market the program and assist volunteers with finding the right opportunity and projects to address needs and gaps.

Demonstration of strong organizational infrastructure, includes: 1) Tangible assets such as facilities, equipment and supplies 2) Governance structure and operations, such as internal policies, purchasing procedures and personnel management 3) Volunteer advisory council to ensure input from the

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community.

1. Assets and facilities: The United Way office is located between the Cities of Manitowoc and Two Rivers. The City of Manitowoc bus line provides services to both cities and stops in front of our office. We have been at our current location for over 17 years. Our building has free and handicap parking next to the office entrance. The current location has adequate land availability which can be adapted to fit our needs. However, we are in the process of assessing another property which would allow for future program growth and the opportunity to support agencies in the community. United Way has up-to-date equipment that will be accessible to the RSVP program including copiers, software, internet access, printers and phones. This equipment will be provided in-kind to the program. Maintenance of the equipment, website use and design are also considered in-kind services to the program.

2. Governance policies: Currently, there are 19 members on the board with an 8 member governance committee. United Way Worldwide requires that we perform a comprehensive agency assessment every three years. There is an employee handbook which employees are required to read sign an acknowledgment of understanding. All staff participates in an annual evaluation with the Executive Director.

The policies and financial systems within UWMC are well established. All reimbursements require bills or receipts and/or internal documentation with signatures prior to payment. All bills are reviewed by the operations manager and the applicable project coordinator prior to the payment being processed. Financial statements are reviewed monthly by staff and bi-monthly by the Board of Directors. An external audit is conducted annually by an independent CPA firm which also audits large government funded organizations. There is a board policy manual and an internal operating policy and procedure manual. As an established nonprofit there are policies and procedures in place to hire, provide orientation and support for the program. Forms and policies available for personnel include mileage and expense reimbursements, employee handbook, nondiscrimination policy and detailed time sheets.

3. Volunteer Advisory Council: One of UWMC's strengths is the ability to bring community members together for a common good and the Volunteer Advisory Council for the RSVP program is no exception. Our intention is to recruit representatives of our Volunteer Stations, 10 members minimally, who would be the ones giving reports and updates about the program/projects because

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they are actively involved and are invested in their success. The council would also be responsible for designing a survey for the RSVP members to ensure accurate input about the program is collected and used to make any improvements.

4. Management systems and experience: There is a management system in place which is evidenced by the structure, practices, procedures and management expectations for delivery of accurate and consistent program delivery. Regular staff meetings are held to ensure staff are working as a team and meeting management expectations.

This would be the first federal grant managed by the UWMC organization. However, the RSVP Program Director has been responsible for writing and managing federal grants thru out her 18 years with the program. The required non-federal share is justified and within our capability to provide and maintain because of our commitment to use and expand volunteer resources to increase the capacity to meet community needs. As an organization that values Give, Advocate, Volunteer, we would not want to see the program fail or not provide it with the resources necessary to meet the needs of the community. Financially the United Way raises over 1 million dollars annually to help make long-lasting change in our community. UWMC is committed to providing in-kind support and leveraging other resources to support the RSVP program because it is a valued community program.

Other

n/a

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

n/a