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Executive Summary

Arrowhead RSVP, a program of the Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, will recruit and support an estimated 1,365 volunteers who will share their skills, experiences and time to serve identified community needs in the Counties of St. Louis, Lake and Cook in Northeastern Minnesota. The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures, including:

- * helping homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities to live independently and increase their social connectedness to alleviate chronic conditions and delay premature nursing home placement;
- * offering access to nutritionally-balanced food and meals for income-eligible residents of all ages who seek assistance due to family or individual emergencies caused by the loss of a job, fire, temporary financial hardship, or other circumstances to help them lead healthy, active lifestyles and ease financial burden;
- * providing access to healthcare by imparting information on health insurance and health benefits programs to older individuals and senior groups;
- * assisting individuals to prevent or manage chronic health conditions, i.e., arthritis, osteoporosis, diabetes, etc., through participation in exercise programs, support groups and self-management workshops;

Some of the activities to serve the above Healthy Futures Focus Area issues include helping elders to age in place by delivering meals and groceries, providing transportation to medical appointments and providing chore services; assisting food insecure families and individuals by gleaning and distributing product at emergency food pantries and preparing and serving meals at community soup kitchens; increasing access to care by working one-on-one with older individuals and speaking to groups about Medicare, changes to benefits and securing supplemental policies; and leading support groups, workshops and exercise classes to prevent and manage chronic conditions.

At the end of the three-year grant, it is anticipated 2,700 homebound, older or disabled individuals will be assisted to remain living independently, 30,000 needy individuals of all ages will receive nutritious emergency foods (with 50% or 15,000 reporting an increase in food security), and 325 residents will receive assistance in accessing health insurance and preventing or managing chronic conditions.

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Additional activities include free tax preparation for 6,000 low-income residents, leveraging cash resources for local critical care health facilities and nonprofit organizations, and other needs determined to be of priority within the communities Arrowhead RSVP serves.

The CNCS federal investment of \$133,923 will be supplemented by \$58,067 in local resources.

Strengthening Communities

The Region We Serve

Arrowhead RSVP serves the 3-county Arrowhead Region of NE MN comprised of Cook, Lake and St. Louis Counties. This very rural region is bordered by Canada to the North, Lake Superior to the East and our only "metropolitan" area, Duluth, to the South. The nearly 10,000 square mile region has a total population of 216,297. Duluth's population is 86,227 and the area's next largest city is Hibbing, located in central St. Louis County with a population of 16,364. For the most part, the region is sparsely populated. 5.2 persons inhabit each square mile in Lake County, and only 3.6 in Cook County.

The vast majority of our region's residents consider themselves White (93%), another 2.4% American Indian, and the remainder Black, Asian or Mixed. 1.3% are Hispanic. Between 2005 and 2010, the White population of the region grew by 0.05%, while populations of color grew by 13.1%. Growth is most notable in the Hispanic/Latino population at a rate of 23.5%. Other demographics: 92.5% of residents are high school graduates or higher, and over 25% have a Bachelor's degree or more; average median age is 42.5; approximately 36,575 (17%) individuals are over the age of 65 compared to Minnesota's overall 13.6% over age 65; nearly 34,000 (15.6%) low-income people reside in St. Louis, Lake and Cook Counties compared to 11% of Minnesota's total population and the mean income is \$59,153. Of the region's 173,688 adult residents, 12.3%, or 21,281 are military veterans compared to 10% of Minnesota's adult population.

The Arrowhead Region is quite rugged and dotted with thousands of lakes surrounded by mixed forest, and is home to Voyageurs National Park, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, and the Superior Hiking Trail which lies amidst the Superior National Forest. Also located in the Arrowhead is Minnesota's only mountain range, the Sawtooth Mountains. Because of this natural beauty and sense of remoteness, a large portion of the economy depends on tourism and timber-

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related industry.

The other primary portion of the Arrowhead economy is the iron mining industry. Taconite is mined on the Mesabi Range, shipped by train to Duluth, Silver Bay, and Two Harbors, and shipped by freighter from these ports to major Rust Belt metropolitan areas such as Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland.

In addition to the three "T's" of taconite, timber and tourism, the City of Duluth is a regional center for banking, retailing, and medical care.

A 2010 report by the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits states that nonprofit activity in the NE region is heavily concentrated in St. Louis County, home to the city of Duluth. This one county accounted for 80 percent of the region's nonprofit workforce, 58 percent of nonprofit employment locations and 84 percent of nonprofit wages. The nonprofit sector in the region has been growing slowly over the last decade, averaging a one percent per year increase in employment locations and two percent per year growth in the nonprofit workforce.

With the ongoing economic downturn, the need for additional volunteers requested by nonprofit and government agencies is increasing. In many situations, retiring staff are not replaced and hiring freezes have been in place for four years. Small, grassroots nonprofits which help seniors to age in place, like Range Respite and Elder Services have been forced to reduce days of operation or reduce staff hours despite seeing a dramatic increase in client usage. For example, the NE Minnesota Food Shelf Network distribution sites reported an increase of nearly 2,200 visits to its 10 food shelves from 2009 to 2012, and numbers continue to increase. The current corps of volunteers cannot meet the demand, particularly in those organizations that are totally volunteer-managed.

The advent of a renewal in the local mining industry promises an increase in higher wage employment in the near future in our area where a "small town" atmosphere fosters a feeling of community in which neighbors are willing to help neighbors. In addition, the Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Board touts that Minnesota consistently ranks among the top states in regard to quality of place. As the state's premier outdoor and recreation playground, NE Minnesota is in a class by itself. With literally thousands of crystal clear lakes and abundant forests, this region is an outdoor enthusiast's dream, a great place to raise a family in a healthy and safe setting. Add affordable,

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accessible housing, a superior education system and an excellent rural health care system, and NE Minnesota stands out among the most desirable living environments in the nation.

Primary Focus Area

However, the very rural region of NE Minnesota presents challenges to citizens and organizations working to serve them. Arrowhead RSVP's Primary Focus Area of Healthy Futures, emphasizes service to promote Aging in Place (delivery of food/other services and provision of transportation), Access to Care (delivery of health insurance information and health/wellness programs), and Access to Nutritious Food (delivery of emergency food and meals).

Census figures show the poverty level is higher and the senior population is growing at a faster rate than Minnesota's overall average. The Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, which provides services to those living in poverty, conducted a community needs assessment in 2012 and found that 44% of those 65 or older had difficulty finding transportation for household needs like shopping and getting to medical appointments; 39% could not do heavy housework; 53% could no longer do home repairs; 53% could not do yard work. Of total respondents, 74% said they did not have enough money to pay bills; 64% did not have enough money to buy clothing; and 65% did not have a job that paid enough to cover their expenses, circumstances that can be eased by providing emergency food and meals to families in need.

A 2011 report by the MN Department of Health on the Health Status of Rural Minnesotans shows that NE Minnesota has a high percent of population over 65 (17%), and as such, high asthma hospitalization and emergency department visit rate; highest rates of diabetes and heart disease mortality; high mortality due to falls; and high mortality rates from Alzheimer's disease, all conditions that can be reduced by modifying risk factors such as physical inactivity and poor diet and by providing education and access to regular health care. The Department of Health also states that chronic conditions may be prevented, delayed or diminished in impact by addressing risk behaviors at all ages. Chronic diseases and conditions and poverty are interconnected. It is the poorest people who are most at risk of developing chronic diseases and conditions, developing complications and dying prematurely. Chronic diseases and conditions may also contribute to poverty as they affect the family's ability to maintain

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employment, insurance and income.

A 2011 study by Feeding America reports that in NE MN, twelve percent (12%) of people are food insecure, meaning they don't have access at all times to enough food to live a healthy, active life; sixteen percent (16%) of children are food insecure; food shelf use has increased seventy percent (70%) since 2008; and food shelf use among seniors has nearly quadrupled the last five years.

Enlisting the assistance of RSVs to deliver meals and groceries, provide transportation to medical appointments, and provide other services such as chore and shopping assistance, health and nutrition information, telecare, exercise, and companionship will help elders to remain living in their own homes, may alleviate chronic conditions and delay premature nursing home placement. In providing regular services to older residents, volunteers will also provide a much-needed socialization and a sense of connection to the greater community. In addition, volunteers may help with all aspects of managing food distribution programs (food drives, food distribution, client assessment, food delivery, etc.) to provide meals and nutritionally-adequate and safe food allotments to income-eligible residents of all ages in St. Louis, Lake and Cook Counties who seek assistance due to family or individual emergencies caused by the loss of a job, fire, temporary financial hardship, or other circumstances. Such support will help to assume a healthy, active lifestyle for those in need and ease their financial burden, freeing up a portion of their resources to meet other basic household expenses like rent, transportation and medical care.

Managing Information and Data

Arrowhead RSVP utilizes Volunteer Reporter software to track volunteer demographics, stations, volunteer placements, and service hours. The program is configured to extract data by geographic area and focus areas within specified timeframes for Cook County, Lake County, Duluth Area, and greater St. Louis County.

Volunteer service hours are most commonly reported by a hardcopy group timesheet submitted by the station supervisor via the postal service, FAX, or e-mail. Staff authorized to accept data reports include the RSVP Director, Coordinators and Program Support staff. In some situations, supervisors report by telephone and volunteers self-report in special circumstances. Volunteer travel reimbursement

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requests are accepted by signed hardcopy only. Volunteer service data is entered monthly in Volunteer Reporter and hardcopy is filed. Volunteer timesheets, reimbursement forms, and any other signed documents are retained for three (3) years following the 3-year grant end date.

On a quarterly basis, volunteer service data is compiled for staff review and presentation to local funders and advisory committee members. This includes number of enrolled volunteers and percentage actively serving, active volunteers by age and gender, number of volunteers accessing transportation assistance, volunteer hours by service category, market value of volunteer service, and statistical progress toward meeting focus area performance measures.

To ensure accountability, Partnership Agreements (MOUs) with nonprofit, government or health care organizations will be in place prior to the referral of volunteers. MOUs will clearly outline the role of the RSVP project and the partner organization, will define appropriate volunteer service, and will determine methods to provide data and any other non-confidential information needed to measure the RSVP project's primary (Healthy Futures) and other CNCS focus area outcomes and outputs to illustrate the impact of volunteer service by older individuals through grant reporting, sharing results with volunteers, and via RSVP's public awareness campaign.

RSVP staff will work with volunteer stations to develop opportunities and related assignment descriptions allowing for older volunteers, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and isolated seniors to impact critical human and social needs (with emphasis on Healthy Futures-related activities) while providing meaningful service; offering leadership roles to enhance the organization's capacity, and making the best use of the volunteers' skills and experience.

Regular communication through e-mail, newsletters and announcements, and personal visits with placement sites and with volunteers will ensure that data is being submitted, the changing needs of the stations, community, and the volunteers are met, and RSVP volunteers are performing duties as referred by RSVP and as assigned and monitored by the station supervisor.

Veterans Assistance

Last year, RSVP volunteers served with a number of organizations that provided services such as

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transportation, chore, friendly visiting, and more to veterans. Key locations include twenty-three RSVs who served 2,300 hours helping with activities and interacting one-on-one with residents of the MN Veterans Home in Silver Bay and nine volunteers who served veterans and their families within the Healthy Futures focus area through the American Legion Post in Two Harbors, MN by providing transportation to appointments, church services and community activities; delivery of groceries, household supplies and clothing; indoor and outdoor chore assistance; help with meal preparation.

Recruitment and Development

High Quality Volunteer Assignments: Arrowhead RSVP will challenge, enhance and enrich the lives of RSVP volunteers by providing

*An application process for new RSVs that sets the groundwork for a mutually beneficial relationship which carefully matches volunteer and assignment by reviewing a volunteer's interests, skills and experience; motivation for volunteering; any need for special accommodations; interest in learning; amount of time they can devote to service. Tools utilized to effectively register volunteers include a written application and interest survey and a face-to-face or telephone interview as well as arranging for a personal interview with potential placement site(s);

*Opportunities with volunteer placement sites that not only help to address community needs relative to a Healthy Futures focus, but will allow for leadership and capacity-building and/or skills development, training and education. For example, volunteers may attend training sessions to lead Matter of Balance falls prevention exercise classes or Alzheimer's support groups, conduct Chronic Disease Self-Management workshops, or coordinate Tax-Aide services;

*A wide variety of community need-driven volunteer options to attract individuals of varying age, gender, geographic location, skill, and interest levels;

*Ongoing support and individualized volunteer re-placement services to accommodate changes in volunteer or station status and ensure a positive experience for both;

*Options for RSVs to serve alongside younger adults, youth, disabled volunteers, veterans, and disadvantaged populations. Such opportunities include serving alongside teens to mentor young children at Apple Tree Learning Center in Virginia, mentoring unemployed young adults in developing successful work habits (being on time, appropriate attire, etc.);

*Information/education distributed to funders, legislators and volunteers themselves illustrating the impact RSVP volunteer service is having on ensuring a Healthy Future for the local community and its residents;

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*Occasions such as recognition events, training sessions, and expos to network with other volunteers to share the service experience and reflect on accomplishments and concerns, and incorporating relevant information gleaned into project operations.

Training and Technical Assistance: Arrowhead RSVP will promote life-long learning to enhance volunteer performance by

*Encouraging RSVP program staff and advisory committee members to attend workshops or view web-based trainings on volunteer management and focus area issues;

*Sharing volunteer management resources provided by CNCS and nationally-recognized volunteer management websites with staff, advisory council members, placement site personnel, and volunteers who serve in or are being trained for capacity-building positions;

*Making RSVP staff available to placement sites for consultation on effective practices in volunteer recruitment, developing significant volunteer positions/job descriptions, management, recognition, and other related topics, particularly those ensuring Healthy Futures for area citizens.

*Assisting volunteer placement sites to plan and implement orientation, training, and educational events for volunteers and reviewing their implementation when renewing partnerships (MOUs) and on scheduled and unscheduled visits;

*Providing or co-sponsoring occasions (expos, recognition events, volunteer fairs, etc.) for RSVs to network with other volunteers to share the service experience and reflect on accomplishments;

*Working with local volunteer centers (Northland Volunteer Center, Virginia and Greater Duluth Volunteer Center) and their affiliates to determine training needs and co-sponsor volunteer management seminars and educational networking meetings for RSVP staff, station personnel, and lead volunteers.

Demographics of Community Served:

The vast majority of citizens in Arrowhead RSVP's service area are White (93%), another 2.4% American Indian with the remaining Black, Asian or mixed. This fact is reflected in the current membership of Arrowhead RSVP with the majority of volunteers (99%) White. Despite the lack of ethnic diversity in this region, Arrowhead RSVP will work to further diversify membership and bring together individuals of various backgrounds.

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With 43.5% of the 65+ population of our area being male and only 26% of our current volunteer corps being male, RSVP will develop promotional materials utilizing language that will specifically appeal to men; work with developmental achievement centers, local centers for independent living, and assisted living residences to encourage service by individuals with disabilities (only 7% of our current membership claim a disability); increase outreach efforts in Duluth's inner-city neighborhoods where the county's most diverse populations reside; maintain partnerships with organizations that serve low-income populations (tax-aide program, food shelves, Salvation Army, Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency) to provide opportunities for RSVP members to volunteer for and alongside those living in poverty; seek partnerships with agencies that will allow RSVs from very rural communities to meet identified needs in their own neighborhood and work to develop new partnerships with groups that provide Healthy Futures and other programming for veterans, active military members, and their families and then work to recruit veterans themselves (9.5% of our area's total population) to serve these projects.

Last year, RSVP volunteers served with a number of organizations that provided services to veterans such as transportation, chore services, friendly visiting, and more. Key locations include twenty-three RSVs who served 2,300 hours helping with activities and interacting one-on-one with residents of the MN Veterans Home in Silver Bay and nine volunteers who serve veterans and their families through the American Legion Post in Two Harbors, MN by providing transportation to appointments, church services and community activities; delivery of groceries, household supplies and clothing; and help with meal preparation.

We are working toward more accurate data collection regarding how many of our RSVP volunteers are veterans themselves and can verify that over sixty-five of our current active volunteers are veterans, though we feel this number is much higher.

Recruitment Methods

*Seeking new age-eligible volunteers through a structured public awareness campaign which includes regularly submitting press releases and volunteer stories to local newspapers, taping monthly local cable access TV shows, posting flyers in locations targeted to a specific audience, and presentations at meetings of community citizens. These efforts will focus on recruiting older citizens, Veterans, Baby

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Boomers, persons with disabilities, minority groups, and/or isolated individuals via publicity materials developed specifically for this purpose, with special focus on the recruitment of volunteers to serve project focus areas in Healthy Futures and male volunteers ;

*Developing marketing and program materials to appeal to specific generations or groups, heeding the overall "tone" of the message, method of distribution, and location of materials. For example, recruitment of Baby Boomers will be through established networks such as churches, civic and health organizations/clubs, our website, social media and will stress flexibility, and service that is meaningful, has impact and requires specific skills. A flyer we utilize for Boomer recruitment states, "You've accomplished so much in your lifetime. You took the initiative to lead, to inspire, to change the world. Do it again. Volunteer."

*Older volunteer recruitment will be through churches, senior citizen organizations and clubs, local media (radio, newspaper and local cable access) with a focus on utilizing their experience in scheduled, longer-term service with opportunities to help their peers to age in place or to mentor the younger generations.

*In order to attract a diverse group of volunteers, photographs in marketing materials will contain diversity (younger/older seniors, those with disabilities, males, Native Americans, etc.), targeted campaigns may explicitly state seeking certain types of people (i.e. "People of color and LGBT individuals are strongly encouraged to volunteer."), including a non-discrimination statement on materials, connecting with other nonprofits that specifically target minorities and create partnerships with them.

*Speaking to civic, religious and other organizations as well as locations frequented by specific individuals (senior centers, nutrition sites, retiree clubs, cultural fraternities, etc.) regarding opportunities to meet community needs through volunteer service;

*Taking advantage of every opportunity to speak one-to-one with individuals age 55+ to encourage them to serve through Arrowhead RSVP;

*Working with other Senior Corps projects (Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions) to refer potential volunteers to the most appropriate assignments;

*Challenging current, dedicated volunteers to encourage friends, neighbors and relatives to serve the community through Arrowhead RSVP.

Retention Strategies

*Offering individualized placement services to meet the volunteers' personal motivations, passions and

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any physical limitations in order to make the best use of the volunteers' skills, experience, time, interests and abilities;

*Offering additional and new opportunities, particularly in the Healthy Futures focus area, to our existing corps of volunteers whose service hours have dropped, who have relocated, or who have expressed interest in alternate service options or who are currently serving with graduating stations;

*Working with placement sites to encourage ensuring the volunteer experience is rewarding by making volunteers feel welcome, providing orientation and training, clearly communicating expectations, providing options for growth, changing or increasing duties as appropriate, and allowing for some fun.

*Sponsoring occasions such as recognition events, training sessions, and expos to network with other volunteers to share the service experience and reflect on accomplishments and concerns.

Recognition Efforts

*Recognizing volunteers for their service, on both an individual and group basis, through personal phone calls and a simple "Thank You" during face-to-face meetings, written greetings on holidays and birthdays, press releases announcing accomplishments of individuals and volunteer groups, occasional token gifts, and recognition events providing an opportunity to reflect on volunteer service.

*Presenting volunteers having 4,000 or more hours of RSVP service with the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award.

*Participating in a collaborative Purple Ribbon Recognition wherein volunteers are provided a purple ribbon to wear during National Volunteer Week entitling them to gifts, discounts and special offers at more than 100 area businesses;

*Publicizing the impact of RSVP volunteer service in the community via local media outlets, social media, presentations, and one-to-one discussions;

*Providing excess insurance for active volunteers, help with travel expenses (as funding allows) for those needing such assistance in order to volunteer.

Program Management

Volunteer Stations and Assignments

Our first step in providing meaningful work for volunteers within the service area is to determine critical community needs within our primary focus area of Healthy Futures by attending networking meetings, legislative/local government briefings, fairs and expos to connect with community

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organizations, citizens and professionals, assisting with community surveys and reviewing local research. Arrowhead RSVP will then focus on developing and maintaining partnerships (MOUs) with nonprofit organizations, health care facilities, and government entities that are working to address needs targeted as urgent. With the assistance of RSVP Advisory Committees, local networking groups such as Elder Services Network and Northland Volunteer Center affiliates, and volunteers, we will determine which entities might be in a position to address targeted community needs relative to the Healthy Futures focus and which would also benefit from partnering with RSVP.

Partnership Agreements (MOUs) with nonprofit, government or health care organizations will be in place prior to the referral of volunteers. MOUs will clearly outline the role of the RSVP project (referral of volunteers, volunteer benefits, monitoring of volunteer activity, etc.), the partner organization (volunteer supervision, training, safety, supplies, reporting of service hours and impact data, adhering to ADA and non-discrimination policies, etc.) and will define appropriate volunteer service (RSVs may not record service hours for religious activities, voter registration or transportation, election activities, labor/anti-labor organizations or activities, or lobbying; may not displace paid workers; must be willing to accept direction by a supervisor; may not accept payment for services from recipients, their legal guardians, family members, or friends; will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, political affiliation or disability.)

RSVP staff will work with volunteer stations to develop opportunities allowing for older volunteers, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and isolated seniors to impact critical human and social needs (with emphasis on Healthy Futures-related activities) while providing meaningful service; offering leadership roles to enhance the organization's capacity, and making the best use of the volunteers' skills and experience.

Assistance will be provided to volunteer stations for developing assignment descriptions, including leadership positions, and methods of data collection relative to the RSVP project's primary (Healthy Futures) and other focus areas that can be used to illustrate the impact of volunteer service by older individuals through grant reporting, sharing results with volunteers, and via RSVP's public awareness campaign.

Scheduled and unscheduled visits to placement sites will allow RSVP staff to observe volunteer activity

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and ensure they are performing duties as referred by RSVP and as assigned and monitored by the station supervisor.

Regular communication through e-mail, newsletters and announcements, and personal visits with placement sites and with volunteers will ensure that the changing needs of the stations, community, and the volunteers are met.

Meeting Changing Needs

As Arrowhead RSVP moves toward focusing volunteer service on required National Performance Measure Focus Areas, staff will closely review current (and potential) partner stations' mission, services provided/alignment with RSVP focus areas, types of volunteer positions offered, level of cooperation to gather and share service hours and impact data, geographic location, and numbers of active RSVP volunteers.

If a station scores poorly relative to the above criteria, a decision may be made to graduate, or discontinue the partnership, particularly if very few RSVPs are actively affiliated and/or the entity's mission and services cannot be aligned with RSVP focus areas.

Arrowhead RSVP's goal is to minimize disruption for both current volunteers and our partner organizations. As such, if a station in question is the only service option for volunteers in a very rural area, RSVP staff will work with the station staff to develop projects or services that either fall under the Health Futures focus area, or are capacity building service activities such as recruiting and/or managing community volunteers (those not affiliated with national service but meeting local community needs), developing or implementing volunteer management practices, expanding or improving services or service-delivery, and leveraging resources for the organization.

If no RSVP options are available and a station is graduated, active volunteers who wish to continue to serve through RSVP will personally be provided information about other opportunities through RSVP and assisted in transferring to focus area service.

Track Record in Healthy Futures Focus Area

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AEOA has sponsored Arrowhead RSVP program since the fall of 1972. At that time the program served northern St. Louis County. Through the years, the project has continued to grow in volunteer numbers, community involvement, and providing impact programming. The project has also successfully received funding from CNCS and/or the Minnesota Board on Aging to expand services to Cook County, Lake County, and then the City of Duluth/southern St. Louis County.

Beyond RSVP, AEOA's experience in volunteer management includes operation of the following Senior Services Department programs which are volunteer based: Northland Volunteer Center, AARP Tax-Aide Program, Cruising to Wellness transportation service, and the NE Minnesota Food Shelf Network. The Northland Volunteer Center, AARP Tax-Aide Program and Cruising to Wellness all become part of the AEOA family due to successful partnerships with the RSVP project. When these grassroots, volunteer-managed organizations were facing dissolution due to lack of funding and/or loss of management staff, they requested placement with our agency and have continued to operate effectively.

AEOA also manages a number of senior-focused programs including the Senior Community Service Employment Program, Senior Dining, and Meals on Wheels which currently has more than a 35-year history with AEOA and serves the entire 7-county region of NE Minnesota including the City of Duluth. Last year, AEOA's Senior Services programs served an estimated 12,000 older individuals. AEOA's Cruising to Wellness provides medical transportation for senior citizens and the NE MN Food Shelf Network is a collaboration of ten emergency food pantries. These, and the Meals on Wheels Program, fall under RSVP's Healthy Futures focus area.

For the past 8+ years, impact programming and reporting has been integrated into each Federally-monitored AEOA program, and into community action program reporting in general. This includes reporting for Arrowhead RSVP which has successfully submitted performance-based work plans and progress reports through the E-grants system since its inception. Since 2005, Arrowhead RSVP has focused it's recruitment and placement with organizations serving Healthy Futures -- Meals on Wheels, emergency food shelves and medical transportation. In 2009 independent living services for seniors was added to our focus. Since 2009, we estimate that nearly 50% of our unduplicated volunteers have provided service in the Healthy Futures focus area, and each year our volunteers'

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impact was positively assessed by conducting client surveys at emergency food shelves and via personal contacts with clients of Meals on Wheels, transportation, and independent living services programs.

An example: During the 2012-13 project year, 242 unduplicated RSVs (including 46 new recruits) gave 19,886.5 hours of service (averaging 82.2 hours each) to distribute monthly food allotments to 37,993 lower-income individuals of all ages in NE Minnesota. A sampling of 15 food distribution projects were asked to conduct a simple survey on one service day during the final quarter of the project year. Participants were asked "Are you (your family) better able to meet other expenses like rent, transportation or medications because you receive food from our program?" 8 of the 15 sites completed and submitted the survey with the following results: 319 clients participated in the survey. Of that number, 298 (93.4%) indicated that they are better able to meet other basic expenses because they have access to the services of a food distribution program.

In the 2014-15 project year, Arrowhead RSVP will support 1,365 volunteers who will provide service under the Healthy Futures Focus Area. It is anticipated 2,700 homebound, older or disabled individuals will be assisted to remain living independently, 30,000 needy individuals of all ages will receive nutritious emergency foods (with 50% or 15,000 reporting an increase in food security), and 325 residents will receive assistance in accessing health insurance and preventing or managing chronic conditions.

Compliance with Federal Regulations: Local Input

RSVP maintains staff in three geographic areas -- central St. Louis County, the North Shore of Lake Superior, and Duluth in Southern St. Louis County. Local community leaders and volunteers, who value the activities and accomplishments of RSVP and its volunteers, are recruited to serve on advisory committees in each location as follows: An overall advisory committee is maintained in greater St. Louis County which is comprised of RSVP volunteers, younger volunteers registered with Northland Volunteer Center, and station managers or volunteer supervisors. Along the North Shore, the local aging issues committee serves as RSVP's advisory as does the Senior Programs Advisory Committee in the City of Duluth. Both committees are comprised of community leaders and volunteers.

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Suitable advisory committee candidates are those individuals knowledgeable about local human and social needs, skilled in the field of volunteerism, capable of assisting the program with administrative issues, and supportive of promoting older adults, including veterans and those with disabilities, as important resources for the community. Utilizing the expertise of local individuals allows us to design programming to meet the specific needs of each community while capitalizing on the unique talents of the local citizenry who have a vested interest in making that community strong.

Advisory members are sought through the advice of sitting representatives, networking with both the nonprofit and business communities, at volunteer placement sites (stations), and from the community in general.

Input of committee members is solicited at structured quarterly or monthly meetings (dependent on location). Members assist in meeting community needs and are asked to review project focus areas and progress toward meeting goals, quarterly volunteer statistics, and recommend partner organizations and potential volunteers within their own communities; suggest ways the project can increase visibility and recognition in the community through utilization of various media sources; advise on recruitment strategies; help to establish program guidelines, and more.

Advisory committees have historically been instrumental in setting volunteer reimbursement guidelines and methods of recognition. This was particularly crucial when RSVP's budget was cut by \$34,000 in 2011. With their assistance we established how we would distribute the remaining funds available and how to best notify the stations and volunteers in a timely manner. Advisory members have also been helpful in finding contributors to volunteer recognition events. One member sought out and scheduled volunteer musicians to entertain at two events; another, a member of the local Chamber of Commerce and Rotary, notified those businesses of upcoming Volunteer Week events which resulted in three new contributors to our Purple Ribbon Recognition and a local masseuse agreeing to provide volunteers with free chair massage at Volunteer Fairs. In addition, advisory council members have worked alongside RSVP staff in surveying local residents for AEOA's community needs assessment to determine underserved populations.

Volunteer Placement and Eligibility

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Before RSVP volunteers are placed with a non-profit organization, health care facility or government entity, the project will have a signed Partnership Agreement (MOU) with the volunteer station and will have developed, in conjunction with the volunteer station, written assignment descriptions. The MOU will require the station to document their non-profit or other status, ensure the safety of the RSVs, provide orientation to station and appropriate in-service training to enhance performance of assignments, provide resources required for performance of assignments including reasonable accommodation, give supervision while on assignment, and appropriate recognition, maintaining and signing volunteer timesheets, provide data related to the written volunteer assignment descriptions and to document accomplishments and impacts relative to RSVP focus areas.

Arrowhead RSVP staff will focus on recruiting individuals who are not currently serving as volunteers and will ensure that all applicants meet eligibility requirements: a person must be 55 years of age or older, willing to serve on a regular basis without compensation, reside in or nearby the community served, and must be willing to accept instruction and supervision as required. Eligibility to be an RSVP volunteer may not be restricted on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, or political affiliation, or on the basis of disability, if the volunteer with a disability is qualified to serve.

Volunteers will complete an RSVP enrollment form and must include: name, address, telephone, birthdate, drivers license number and insurance company (if s/he will be driving to the volunteer assignment), insurance beneficiary, skills/interest survey, signature and date. Optional information includes ethnicity, Veteran status, gender, and physical conditions to consider when assigning volunteer duties.

Organizational Capability

The sponsor, Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA), is legally responsible for all programmatic and fiscal aspects of the project and will not delegate or contract this responsibility to another entity.

By positioning RSVP staff in key geographic locations, i.e., City of Duluth, central St. Louis County, and the north shore of Lake Superior (Lake and Cook Counties), Arrowhead RSVP is able to ensure that volunteers are able to participate and focus on needs in their own communities, focusing on

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Healthy Futures, throughout the service area. Hiring a local resident to serve as an RSVP Coordinator and building an advisory committee of area citizens allows for immediate knowledge of the region, its people and organizations, and their challenges.

Key Staff Positions: Arrowhead RSVP's day to day operations are managed by the project director, Bonnie Ebnet, who has worked with the RSVP program since 1986. She began as program secretary followed by office manager, coordinator, and then being hired as director in 1994. Ms. Ebnet has a BAS in Elementary Education and has experience in managing nonprofit organizations and working in city government. Bonnie was awarded AEOA's Department Hall of Fame Award for outstanding service and dedication in 2000. Please note that a waiver has historically been approved by CNCS for the Director's position to be at 95% time rather than full-time.

Programmatic oversight is provided by Marilyn Ocepek, Director of AEOA's Senior Services Department, the Director of Arrowhead Senior Nutrition Services and a member of AEOA's Management Team. She has over thirty-five years of experience with AEOA Senior Services and over nineteen years as director of the department. Ms. Ocepek's main responsibility is to conduct the day-to-day management and administrative functions of Senior Nutrition Services and the department.

AEOA's Board of Directors review the accomplishments of RSVP volunteers as reported by the project director via the Senior Services Department report included in each bi-monthly meeting packet. The RSVP Director also makes a formal presentation to the board annually. The AEOA Board Chairperson, along with the Executive Director, is responsible for review of grant applications.

Other RSVP staff includes three (3) part-time coordinators in key geographic locations, two part-time support staff, and a part-time bookkeeper. RSVP's newly-retired coordinator for Cook and Lake Counties, Jan O'Donnell, has a BS in Social Work, has worked in the non-profit sector for the last 38 years and was hired in June 2012 (position currently open). The St. Louis County Coordinator, Denise Ramfjord, has a degree in Criminology, experience in program coordination and accounting, and was hired in early January 2012. The Duluth Area Coordinator, Kirsten Ryden, has a BA in Social Work and has worked as a social worker and volunteer coordinator with long-term care facilities. She was hired by RSVP in March 2012.

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To effectively manage the program within the large geographic area, RSVP Coordinators work closely with organizations and individuals within their own community to: Assist with program development, implementation and evaluation of service within project focus areas, including gathering data for required reports; recruit, place, supervise, train and evaluate volunteer; serves as first point of contact with volunteer placement sites/staff; maintain a regular schedule of site visits; organize formal recognition of volunteers and support agencies; develop and maintain strong working relationships with community organizations and agencies; serve as a liaison between volunteers and placement organizations; develop and implement local public relations and marketing plans.

The RSVP Director provides overall administrative oversight of RSVP by ensuring compliance with terms and conditions of the federal grant and applicable federal regulations; selecting, training, and supervising program staff; monitoring staff performance, maintaining work schedules, reviewing financial statements, preparing annual budgets, developing and implementing policies, and generating required reports; working with sponsor staff and community groups to support resource development; maintaining program quality by planning annual program goals and objectives that ensure that at least 25% percent of unduplicated volunteers are placed in the Primary Focus Area of Healthy Futures with 10% reflected in outcome-based assignments; overseeing program activities, supporting coordinators as they serve volunteers and volunteer stations, providing leadership, information, and consultation; mediating concerns or conflicts which may arise within the program; developing positive public relations and communications in the community by providing informational programs to interested groups and organizations; preparing media materials; serving on community boards, councils, and committees; ensuring for recognition of volunteers and community partners; maintaining professional knowledge and skills by attending relevant workshops, training, and conferences; working closely with RSVP Community Advisory Group, soliciting their advice and assistance on matters affecting project operation.

The project director has in place written RSVP management guidelines in the event she leaves her position unexpectedly. With regular review of the project's focus areas and performance, the Senior Services Director is knowledgeable about the program and is in a position to assign and assist one of AEOA's many experienced managers to take over the RSVP Director's duties, with the help of other RSVP staff, until which time a replacement would be hired. The project director also keeps staff informed by regularly holding staff meetings, and including area coordinators in delineating project

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focus areas, priority activities, progress toward performance goals, and day-to-day management issues.

With nearly 400 employees (part-time and full-time) and 16 networked office locations within a seven-county service area, AEOA has the manpower, equipment, and physical resources to successfully support the RSVP program. Sponsor support systems include an agency auto pool, maintaining an office supplies inventory, human resources and IT departments, strategic planning staff, and public relations/marketing.

Specific procedures are in place and distributed to each AEOA employee which outline procedures for purchase and approval of supplies and equipment, personnel responsible for various functions/approvals at each management level, and staff/volunteer travel guidelines, with staff reimbursement paid at the current Federal recommendation and volunteer reimbursement paid at \$.20/mile.

AEOA's Personnel Policy outlines job classifications, working conditions, employee benefits, safety guidelines, dress code, disciplinary procedures, discrimination, sexual harassment, affirmative action, employee training and education, grievance procedures, etc. In addition, specific and consistent position descriptions have been developed for each staff position at AEOA which indicate place in line of authority and reporting department in addition to the more general job qualifications, duties and responsibilities.

The project's sponsor, AEOA, has 49 years of experience in providing accounting services for federal (Head Start, RSVP, Senior Nutrition, Department of Transportation, HHS Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, etc.), state and local funders and has an accounting system that meets statutory and regulatory requirements of those funding sources. An audit of agency activities is conducted annually by an independent, certified public accounting firm according with Government Accounting Standards, incorporating generally accepted accounting principles and complying with US Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133.

Using the SAGE 100 fund accounting software and its companion ABRA HR and payroll system, the agency's financial reporting system is updated weekly by the recording of receipts, disbursements and

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adjustments to an automated accounting system which includes accounts receivable, accounts payable, payroll, general ledger, inventory, job costing and asset management. Fiscal control of program funds is accomplished through this accounting system following the requisition, voucher and receipt principle. In-kind contributions are documented by the completion of donor forms including date, type of contribution, value, source of contribution, and signature.

The ability to review the current financial status of a grant managed by AEOA is readily available to individuals designated as responsible for fiscal oversight of that grant. An RSVP Advisory Council member may review any documentation upon request. At any given time, the RSVP Bookkeeper, RSVP Director, Senior Services Department Director, AEOA Fiscal Director, or AEOA Executive Director may review receipts and expenditures.

AEOA manages CNCS grants in accordance with RSVP Regulations and the Notice of Grant Award (NGA). Project costs are reviewed by RSVP and sponsor staff so as to be reasonable and justified as essential to project operations. To ensure accountability, numerous staff play a role in all transactions. For example, when a bill for a purchase is received, it is reviewed for accuracy by Project Director, Bonnie Ebnet, who marks the bill with a numeric code so that it is paid from the appropriate designated RSVP grant fund and line item. The coded bill goes to the Senior Services Program Support II, Kim Fultz, who electronically vouchers the bill for payment and returns a summary sheet with bills attached for additional review and signature by Project Director, Bonnie Ebnet. The vouchered bills are then given to the RSVP Bookkeeper, Nick Tuskan, for payment. Payments are then either made by direct deposit, or mailed by a different staff person in the sponsor's Fiscal Services Department or returned to the sponsor's Receptionist, Patty Palo, who releases the checks to an RSVP staff person by signature. Released checks are generally volunteer mileage reimbursements and are then mailed along with a new reimbursement request sheet by RSVP's Program Support I, Heather Hansen.

Arrowhead RSVP and its sponsor will work to secure and increase non-federal dollars to support the project and its volunteers and to serve as local match. Annual grant requests will be submitted to St. Louis County Health & Human Services, Lake County Human Services, and the Minnesota Board on Aging. Current plans include requesting support from local, one-time grants offered by MN Power, Lake Country Power, and MN Energy Resources. In addition, AEOA's Planning Department regularly

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reviews notices of funding available through public and private sources, and informs RSVP staff of grants for which we are eligible. Fundraising is accomplished through agency-wide community events and raffles. Volunteer stations and local businesses provide in-kind donations for recognition events, free space for Bone Builders exercise classes, and community advisory committees glean information on local funding sources and share that information with the project.

AEOA consistently works to provide services that are needed by residents of NE Minnesota. AEOA conducts face-to-face community surveys every three years to locate underserved populations, gaps in services, and to determine ways to improve current programming. The 2012 AEOA Community Needs Assessment (CNA) survey was completed by 233 community members with an additional, separate section specific to the needs of senior citizens done via telephone by an RSVP volunteer. Topics addressed included housing, health status, employment, transportation and quality of life. Top reported responses: 74% reported a problem in paying monthly bills; 73% noted a problem paying debts; 66% reported an inability to get credit; 64% said having money to buy clothing was problem; 65% do not have a job that pays enough to support basic needs; 65% had problems paying for car repairs. The senior citizen section of the CNA surprisingly found that 77% own a vehicle and 67% still drive, yet 46% fear driving at night, 43% feared driving long distances, 44% found reliable transportation to meet household needs like shopping and medical appointments to be a problem, and 19% said money for gas was a problem.

Arrowhead RSVP uses information learned from the CNA to focus partnership development and volunteer recruitment/placement with organizations that fall under our Primary Focus Area of Healthy Futures. To identify and address the RSVP project's strengths and challenges, the advisory council completes the Community Stakeholders Survey each year as recommended by CNCS.

Other

Not applicable.

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

Not applicable.