

Narratives

Executive Summary

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is the planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for metro Atlanta. As the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and the Aging Disability Resource Connection (ADRC), ARC plans and provides comprehensive services to address the needs of the region's older adult and disabled populations with the mission of creating communities that support healthy, active, independent lives for all individuals through the planning, delivery and coordination of access to information, housing and mobility options, health care and delivery of supportive services.

Metro Atlanta RSVP will engage a minimum of 175 RSVP volunteers to serve with the program through a network of 8 stations including county senior service programs and local non-profits. Volunteer activities focus on community education through presentations, staffing tables at informational events, facilitating evidenced based programs, one-on-one counseling, and conducting administrative and skill based activities in support of program focus areas. Healthy Futures is the primary focus area. In support of Healthy Futures, volunteers will address key community issues such as: how older adults, persons with disabilities, and caregivers access needed programs and services; the importance of health, self-management and preventive services; child and older adult obesity; access to transportation; insurance counseling; and food security through community gardens and nutrition education.

The project will serve 75,000 individuals over the three-year grant period, empowering them with information and supportive services as laid out in program work plans. Target populations include older adults, children, diverse populations, veterans/military families and persons with disabilities.

Data has guided the program to focus on the need for increased outreach in the areas of health education, preventive services, management of chronic conditions and information to help individuals age in place. RSVP will use participation numbers and various evaluation methods such as presentation evaluations, pre and post-tests, and surveys to gauge the impact of information shared and changes in knowledge, social support, food security and behavior.

The CNCS federal investment of \$149,695 will be supplemented by a \$ 64, 156 grantee match and an additional \$49,144 in excess funding support.

Strengthening Communities

Narratives

1. Describe the community and demonstrate that the community need(s) identified in the Primary Focus Area exists in the geographic service area.

ARC is the regional planning, development, and intergovernmental coordination agency on transportation, land use, environmental services, community services and job training for the ten county Atlanta region. ARC has extensive experience and expertise in analyzing data, assessing community needs, projecting demand, modeling and implementing solutions. Working with county governments and local nonprofits, ARC provides a wide range of services to the regions more than 500,000 older adults and persons with disabilities, more than 80% of which are in the counties served by RSVP: Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Gwinnett and Fulton Counties.

The Atlanta region is home to over 4 million people and is the 3rd fastest growing region in the nation, growing 24% between 2000 and 2010. The region's diversity is shown in the urban, rural and suburban communities of its 68 cities and unincorporated areas. Like the rest of the country, the Atlanta region is experiencing a dramatic increase in its older adult population, with 1 in 5 individuals projected to be over age 60 by 2030. Comparisons between Census 2000 and 2010 data showed an almost 50% increase in the 45-64 age cohort and a 45% increase in the 65+ cohort. This age group will continue to grow dramatically as Baby Boomers age in place.

Analysis of 2010 Census data shows racial and ethnic minorities are growing rapidly in the older adult population. Incomes in these populations vary, but over 12% of those 65+ have an annual income of less than \$10,000.

Combined data from the counties RSVP serves indicate 8% of the residents are over 65. Of those 65 and older, 8.4% live in poverty and 36% report a disability. Between 2000-2010, these counties have seen a dramatic increase in the 65+ Black, Asian and Hispanic populations. The most significant increase being in Gwinnett county with increases by 365%, 252%, and 242% respectively. An average of 13% of residents in these counties did not graduate from high school. (County population percentages, income, disability and education data from 2009 American Community Survey Estimates; Population and ethnicity data from 2010 Census.)

The Atlanta region is home to many major universities such as Georgia Tech, Emory, Morehouse,

Narratives

Spelman, Mercer and Georgia State. Large corporations such as Coca-Cola, Delta Airlines, IBM, UPS, Southern Company, SunTrust Bank and the Home Depot are also headquartered in Atlanta and serve as major employers for the area.

Census data estimates over 12% of Georgians are veterans, and 40% are over 65 (Dept. of Veterans Affairs, 2011) With 2.9% of this population being disabled and an estimated 5.6% living in poverty, veterans would especially benefit from much of the information, services and benefits enrollment that RSVP volunteers provide.

The existing health and social services systems are struggling to keep up with the demands and challenges created by this dramatic demographic shift. Data from the 2007 survey by the Carl Vinson Institute for ARC which is one of the most current studies specifically looking at wants and needs of older adults in the Atlanta region, found that 64% of the 55+ population said they would "stay as long as they can," while 86% of the 80+ said they would stay in their current residence. With the goal of the majority of older adults being to live and age in their communities, health and supportive service programs alone cannot help people achieve this goal.

Data from Georgia Department of Aging Services town hall meetings and over 40,000 calls annually to ARC's information lines points to the need for increased engagement in the areas of health education, preventive services, management of chronic conditions and information to help individuals age in place. RSVP continues to develop outreach opportunities to help address these issues through the Healthy Futures focus area. RSVP also continues to maintain a focus on expanding program opportunities through strategic partnerships and implementation of evidenced based programming.

Nearly 60% of adults over 50 do not meet CDC's recommended physical activity standards and Georgian's are not taking advantage of preventive healthcare and regular exercise. Isolation and lack of productive paid or unpaid work can exacerbate these problems.

Chronic diseases and related conditions like cardiovascular disease (CVD), diabetes and arthritis contribute to 95% of healthcare expenditures among older adults. CVD is Georgia's number one killer and over 34% of Georgia's adults over 65 have diabetes, which is Georgia's 8th most common cause of death.(CDC, 2010) Osteoarthritis causes disability for 25% of Georgia's adults. (Georgia Burden of

Narratives

Arthritis Report, 2006) The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services also estimates that one in every five Medicare patients discharged from the hospital will be admitted within 30 days after their discharge, which is a huge financial burden on the Medicare system.

Georgia is the 20th most obese state in the country, according to the annual "F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future," 2013 report from the Trust for America's Health (TFAH) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The state's adult obesity rate is 29% and the rate for youths 10-17 is 21.3%. Individuals who are African American, Hispanic, have incomes below \$25,000 or did not graduate from high school are at higher risk for obesity than other populations. Obese adults and children are at greater risk for chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease and asthma and a reduced quality of life. An average of 24% of the adult population living in counties served by RSVP is obese (CDC, Obesity statics by county 2009).

It is estimated that 129,000 Georgians 65 and older have pre-diabetes and many are undiagnosed or unaware that they have diabetes or pre-diabetes, and therefore may be doing nothing about it (GA Department of Public Health GA-DPH 2012). The total cost of diabetes in Georgia is about \$5.1 billion including medical costs of \$3.3 billion due to diabetes and \$1.8 billion in lost productivity costs due to diabetes. In 2012, diabetes was the 10th leading cause of death in Georgia (GA-DPH 2012).

2. Describe how the service activities in the Primary Focus Area lead to National Performance Measure outputs or outcomes.

For the past 6 years RSVP has placed significant focus on Healthy Futures focus area activities in order to address some of the epidemics described above. Service activities include community education through presentations, staffing tables at informational events, facilitating evidenced based programs, and one-on-one counseling. Volunteers provide health education on the following topics: the importance of health and preventive services; empowerment through personal health records; medication management; diabetes education and screening information; dealing with hearing loss; Medicare and related benefits; how to access programs and services for older adults and persons with disabilities; and Medicare and consumer fraud.

Last program year, more than 40,000 individuals were reached through Healthy Futures activities.

Narratives

Of these, over 3,000 individuals were provided with intensive counseling regarding Medicare and related insurance concerns by GeorgiaCares Medicare hotline volunteers. A majority of these were reached through information provision and one-on-one counseling at community events and through educational sessions. Participants in community education sessions are asked to complete evaluations after the session. Over 80% of the previous year's respondents who participated in education programs under the Healthy Futures focus area reported the information was important to them; they had a better understanding of the issues covered after the presentation and they planned to take action with the information learned during the session.

RSVP also engages volunteers as facilitators for several evidenced based programs that support better choices, healthy lifestyles and self-management. Stanford's Chronic Disease Self-Management Program gives people the confidence and motivation they need to manage the challenges of living with a chronic health condition. A two year study by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality found CDSMP participants had: increased exercise; better coping strategies and symptom management; better communication with their physicians; improvement in their self-rated health, disability, social and role activities, and health distress; more energy and less fatigue; decreased disability; and fewer physician visits and hospitalizations.

CATCH Healthy Habits is an intergenerational program which combats child and older adult obesity through helping both groups incorporate better nutrition choices and physical activity into their daily lives. Studies of the first 3 years of the original CATCH program implementation in Texas schools found 11 percent fewer girls and 9 percent fewer boys receiving the intervention were overweight or obese.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers helps caregivers develop a wealth of self-care tools to: reduce personal stress; change negative self-talk; communicate their needs to family members and healthcare or service providers; communicate more effectively in challenging situations; recognize the messages in their emotions, deal with difficult feelings; and make tough caregiving decisions. Data from class participant evaluations indicates the PTC program improves: self-care behaviors, management of emotions, self-efficacy, and use of community resources.

RSVP is also developing new partnerships to more fully address outcome based work plans for Healthy

Narratives

Futures under the new National Performance Measures.

The World Health Organization identifies mobility as a determinant of health and an important component of maintaining one's independence. In the Atlanta region where individuals are so dependent on cars, being able access and utilize transportation alternatives is critical. In partnership with Cobb Senior Services and the Cobb Department of Transportation, volunteers will begin to facilitate travel training, lead trips on transit and provide other related services to help older adults and persons with disabilities feel more confident in taking public transit and help them access services that allow them to live independently. Through this process, volunteers will help empower participants to take transit independently and plan trips on their own, helping increase their perception of social support and access to supportive services.

Nearly 17% of Georgia's households are food insecure (Department of Agriculture, 2012). In order to address food security and long term hunger, RSVP is partnering with Truly Living Well, to engage volunteers to work with individuals in or near food deserts conducting activities such as educational sessions and one-on-one counseling to provide individuals with gardening skills, nutrition education, benefits enrollment and other services to help increase their access to healthy foods and improve food security.

3. Your plan and infrastructure to support data collection and ensure National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs are measured, collected, and managed.

ARC receives numerous federal, state and private grant awards, and has extensive experience collecting data to identify outcomes and program impact in order to satisfy grant requirements. Additionally, ARC has experience with receiving and compiling data from numerous sub contract agencies in order to measure and report data for grant funding.

Annually, ARC reviews identified outcomes and outputs in relation to National Performance Measures. In conjunction with each performance measure outlined in the grant ARC identifies the information and instruments needed in order to collect and measure this data. Standard templates have been developed for each of these instruments and will be utilized by volunteers and stations to collect the needed data for reporting and measurement purposes.

Narratives

Monthly stations submit: volunteer hours, activities, numbers reached through each event, number of veterans served, training sessions held, surveys, and pre/post-tests. RSVP utilizes Volgistics, a volunteer management database, to track volunteer hours, number of veterans reached and number of individuals served to help ensure program goals are being met and outputs can be compiled for reports.

Participant participation and outcome data from surveys and pre/post tests will be tracked on spreadsheets and compiled and analyzed by ARC for reports.

Several evidenced based programs such as CDSMP and CATCH Healthy Habits require additional data collection and analysis which is compiled by the grant funder.

The RSVP director meets regularly with stations about program implementation, challenges and opportunities. This gives ARC the ability to assess ongoing progress at each station and determine any specific areas which need to be addressed.

4. Describe any activity in service to veterans and/or military families as part of service in the Primary Focus Area, Other Focus Areas or Capacity Building.

Currently, 7% of RSVP volunteers are veterans. To better serve veterans and military families, RSVP will continue to actively recruit veterans and develop opportunities to expand outreach to this population; incorporate relevant veterans information into current outreach presentations; and identify which presentations can be tailored and expanded to specifically target veterans groups.

A partnership was just developed with the VA where RSVP volunteers will provide monthly information and assistance activities at the VA Community Research Referral Program Center which helps homeless veterans. Additional stations are expected to become involved with this program over the next year.

Veterans and military families are currently served through all focus areas. RSVP tracks veterans and military families served through these activities via data collected on program evaluations. Data

Narratives

shows over 2,000 veterans were served through these activities last year.

Additionally, RSVP has identified contacts with active veterans groups in the Atlanta region and actively markets RSVP volunteer opportunities and outreach programs to these groups to more effectively reach this population.

Recruitment and Development

1. Your plan and infrastructure to create high quality volunteer assignments with opportunities such as sharing their experiences, abilities, and skills to improve their communities and themselves through service in their communities.

ARC has extensive experience in researching regional issues and developing strategic plans to address identified needs. From the initial assessment, focus areas were identified and work plans and volunteer assignments created. Work plans and volunteer assignments are reviewed annually and community, station and volunteer input are taken into account when determining if changes need to be made.

RSVP volunteer activities focus on impact and evidenced based projects that meet the community needs identified. The RSVP director works with stations to identify focus areas and volunteer activities which complement stations' current mission, programs and abilities, and meets localized community needs. RSVP and station staff work together to develop a range of volunteer opportunities with varying levels of responsibilities and training requirements to provide options for volunteers within each issue area. Most opportunities offer a high level of volunteer engagement, but enough flexibility to provide opportunities for those who don't want large amounts of responsibility. Position descriptions may be similar across stations, but each station still brings its own unique aspects and opportunities to the program.

Service through RSVP provides volunteers with the ability to help others while maintaining the feeling of vitality and usefulness which is sometimes lost after retirement. Volunteers serve as community ambassadors using their skills and expertise to expand outreach around critical community issues and help stations accomplish goals beyond what could normally be achieved without volunteer support.

Volunteer recruitment targets retired professionals who in many instances already come equipped

Narratives

with some of the skill sets needed to provide community presentations, facilitate trainings, and offer in depth counseling on community programs and resources. RSVP accepts all applicants determined to be appropriate and eligible for the program and who pass a background check.

Because of the high level of training required for many of the volunteer roles, it is imperative that volunteers have a strong understanding of the opportunities available and what is expected of them in each role. Volunteers go through an application and screening process with RSVP Coordinators and site supervisors to identify the skills and abilities volunteers have to contribute and determine if the potential volunteer is a good match for RSVP and vice versa. In some instances potential volunteers shadow current volunteers in their role so the candidate more fully understands what their volunteer role would include.

Many volunteers are drawn to specific programs because of life experiences that have had a significant impact on them and they want to use their experience to help others. For instance, several MDSP volunteers have diabetes or have a loved one with diabetes. For them it is truly a mission to share their experiences and help raise awareness of what diabetes is, the importance of screening and how to better manage chronic conditions.

As volunteers gain experience in their assignments, opportunities to take on increased leaderships, mentor roles or serve as trainers become available. Once involved with the program, volunteers often contribute other professional skills, such as strategic planning, marketing and curriculum development. One volunteer came on board to facilitate the CATCH program, but as she found out about the different educational programs was able to offer her expertise around hearing loss and now provides educational sessions on hearing loss to older adults in the community, filling a need we were previously unable to meet.

Volunteers also provide critical input on development of new outreach initiatives through focus groups and help in the development and evaluation of training and collateral materials.

Stations convene volunteers regularly to provide training and networking opportunities. These meetings also act as a forum where volunteers can discuss their experiences volunteering through RSVP and reflect with their peers on the meaning of their service.

Narratives

Data collected through previous RSVP program year presentation evaluations indicate the information volunteers provide in the community is making a difference. Over 80% of participants evaluated across the various work plans feel they have a better understanding of the issues covered, find the resources provided useful and plan to take action with the information provided.

In addition to providing an important service in the community, volunteering has a significant impact on the volunteers themselves. Volunteers are surveyed annually to assess how their service affects them personally. Results from the February 2013 survey showed 87% felt their service had improved their sense of accomplishment; 76% had a better feeling of purpose since volunteering; 93% felt through their service they had a better ability to make a difference in someone's life; and 72% reported a greater sense of self-esteem through volunteering with the program. Additionally, 63% of the responding volunteers stated their physical health was either better or a lot better since volunteering with RSVP; 65% reported a better sense of well-being and 81% reported a better overall quality of life. The survey also showed that 91% of the RSVP volunteers who responded are satisfied with their experience as a RSVP volunteer.

2. Your plan and infrastructure to ensure RSVP volunteers receive training needed to be highly effective means to addressing identified community need(s) in both the Primary Focus Area and in Other Focus Areas or Capacity Building.

Upon entering RSVP, volunteers receive a volunteer handbook and participate in a volunteer orientation to provide a comprehensive overview of the program, how their role fits into addressing community needs and their next steps in training and community engagement.

Volunteers are not required to have experience in any of the focus areas to volunteer. However, some volunteers already have skill sets needed to provide community presentations, facilitate trainings, and offer in depth counseling on a wide variety of community needs RSVP addresses.

Many opportunities within the program are part of Metro Atlanta RSVP's 12 signature programs and require intense topic specific training. ARC staff experts such as the GeorgiaCares Coordinator, Health Specialist and Resource Development Coordinator have extensive experience in many of the issues

Narratives

addressed. RSVP has developed training curriculums around key topic areas and ARC staff members provide ongoing technical assistance to station staff and volunteers on these issues. Once trained volunteers can shadow or partner with seasoned volunteers to gain experience before going out on their own.

In addition, RSVP partners with organizations such as the Oasis Institute and Stanford University to implement evidenced based programs such as the CATCH Healthy Habits and the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program. Partners like the Red Cross and Cobb Emergency Management provide Disaster Preparedness training and support to RSVP volunteers. Piedmont Hospital and the Georgia Medical Care Foundation also serve as partners and technical resources in developing training around issues related to personal health records, medication management, and healthcare systems.

Training classes range between 2 to 24 hours depending on the topic and include comprehensive facilitator guides, power points, handouts and program and facilitator evaluations. Trainings are held monthly at stations, partner organizations and community facilities in RSVP's service area. Volunteers complete evaluations after each training session. Input from these evaluations helps inform changes made to the program.

RSVP consistently strives to make sure materials and information provided addresses the needs of the community in a way that is easy for the volunteers to deliver and in a format that is engaging and effective for program participants. Last year, RSVP conducted a focus group with volunteers to learn what they wanted to see in the curriculum and gain ideas on how to make session more interactive for the participants. Based on their feedback, RSVP formed a Curriculum Workgroup of staff and volunteers which reviewed all curricula, identified SMART objectives for each curriculum, incorporated adult learning theory techniques and revamped program evaluations.

RSVP partnered with student interns from Emory University's School of Public Health to facilitate this process and help pilot the materials. The pilots were successful and the new curricula materials and trainings are now being rolled out. A New Volunteer Orientation format and two new training sessions to help volunteers more effectively share information at community fairs and build skills for conducting community presentations were also developed out of this process.

Narratives

In addition to standard training opportunities, volunteers are invited to expand their skill base by participating in quarterly educational and professional development trainings covering topics such as senior employment; the Affordable Care Act and the New Healthcare Law; and Elder Abuse.

Volunteers are also invited to participate in professional training offered through ARC and web based training offered by partners on topics relevant to the volunteer's position.

RSVP Advisory Committee members receive an orientation and high level training on new programs and services being rolled out. Committee members are also invited to participate in any of the regularly provided volunteer trainings.

3. The demographics of the community served and plans to recruit a volunteer pool reflective of the community served.

The 2010 Census identifies the racial makeup and population of Atlanta was 54% Black or African American, 10% Hispanic, 38% White, and 3% Asian. Atlanta has one of the highest LGBT populations per capita with 12.8% of the city's total population recognizing themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. The Department of Veteran's Affairs estimates over 12% of the state's population are veterans.

To reach potential volunteers ARC employs several recruitment methods. Stations promote programs and activities through their networks to increase community awareness and generate program interest. At a regional level, ARC leverages existing relationships with board members, Regional Leadership Alumni, Healthy Aging Coalition, partners, local associations, business contacts, fraternity and sorority groups, media and retiree groups to promote RSVP and recruit volunteers. ARC also promotes RSVP opportunities via the ARC and AgeWise Connection websites, announcements and articles in community papers, postings on sites such as Volunteer Match, and partner's websites as appropriate.

To ensure a more diverse volunteer workforce, including veterans, adult males and minority groups, RSVP works with organizations such as local fraternities, the YMCA, veterans groups, Jewish Family and Career Services, Center for Pan Asian Community Services, 100 Black Men and the Regional Council of Churches to promote RSVP volunteer opportunities.

Narratives

New partnerships were recently developed with the Good Neighboring Campaign, Catholic Charities and SAGE (Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders). These partnerships will focus on recruiting Asian, Hispanic and GLBT older adults to serve as RSVP volunteers, providing services not only to the general community but also within their specific communities.

RSVP volunteers conduct outreach activities in a diverse variety of communities with individuals from many different socio-economic backgrounds. When appropriate volunteers share available RSVP volunteer opportunities at these activities and encourage individuals to apply.

4. Your plan and infrastructure to retain and recognize the RSVP volunteers.

To retain a strong cadre of volunteers the RSVP director works closely with stations to get volunteer feedback and track satisfaction with assignments, training, support and appreciation. RSVP sends out an annual satisfaction survey to volunteers to gauge the impact service with RSVP has on their life; their general satisfaction with the program; and get ideas on how to improve the program. Regular meetings at stations help maintain volunteer engagement, offers social opportunities and provides a chance to offer feedback and reflect on their service.

RSVP engages volunteers in all aspects of program development and delivery and provides a significant amount of staff support to ensure things run smoothly and volunteers have the resources needed to do their jobs. ARC feels this support is one of the key reasons volunteers have such a positive experience through their RSVP assignments and correlates to the high retention rate of volunteers.

In the event a volunteer or station determines an assignment is not a good fit, RSVP works with the volunteer to identify other suitable placements. When volunteers become inactive they are also asked to complete an exit interview to help ARC gauge why participants choose to no longer be involved and make changes if warranted. On occasion, costs associated with volunteering can cause people to stop volunteering. To offset these costs, RSVP provides limited mileage and expense reimbursement as well as additional insurance to volunteers.

ARC hosts an annual RSVP recognition event which highlights volunteer accomplishments in each program area. Volunteers share with the group why they volunteer with RSVP and the impact it has

Narratives

had on them and those that they serve. These presentations create a lot of meaningful discussion and help volunteers better understand how their service fits into the larger program. Volunteers are also included in local station recognition events.

ARC and stations work to recognize volunteer efforts and activities on a more informal ongoing basis through things like small appreciation activities, cards, and recognition via local newspaper, television, websites, and newsletters. Volunteers regularly participate in television and newspaper interviews to help promote RSVP programs. This gives volunteers the opportunity to be recognized for their service and share information not only about the services they provide but also about the benefits they receive.

Program Management

1. Your plan and infrastructure to ensure management of volunteer stations in compliance with RSVP program regulations, such as preventing or identifying prohibited activities.

The RSVP director works with each station to train staff and volunteers on RSVP processes, procedures and to ensure they understand and comply with all program requirements. For this purpose RSVP has developed both a Volunteer and a Station Handbook which outlines program policies, procedures and prohibited activities. The RSVP director provides a site supervisor orientation to every new supervisor which covers the handbook and goes into detail around work plans, volunteer assignments, record keeping, reporting and monitoring.

Each station has a station supervisor who works with RSVP staff in program planning, development of volunteer opportunities and program expansion. Station supervisors provide volunteer management, oversight of volunteer activities and outreach, volunteer training, program publicity and reporting. The RSVP director works with station supervisors to identify the volunteer opportunities for each station and create position descriptions for each role.

The RSVP director quarterly convenes station supervisors to discuss national or local program changes, answer questions and provide professional development opportunities around volunteer and program management. Stations turn in monthly reports that identify the volunteer hours, numbers reached and activities conducted and these are reviewed monthly by the RSVP director. Station monitoring visits are conducted by the RSVP director in order to ensure stations are

Narratives

maintaining required documents and records on file and that volunteers roles are appropriate and do not include prohibited activities as listed in the Station Handbook. When issues are found, a letter outlining deficiencies and what must be done to remedy them is sent to the Executive Director and station supervisor. The station must then submit an action plan detailing how they will regain compliance within 30 days. RSVP will follow up at that time to ensure the action plan has been implemented and no other issues exist.

If outside of monitoring visits a station is identified as out of compliance, the RSVP director would address the issue immediately in the same manner as described above. In either instance if the issue was not corrected RSVP would have to remove that station from the program for non-compliance.

2. Your plan and infrastructure to develop and/or oversee volunteer stations to ensure that volunteers are performing their assigned service activities.

When RSVP stations join the program, the RSVP director works with them to determine which focus areas best complement their current mission, programs and abilities, and works with them to develop appropriate volunteer opportunities under these focus areas that meet community needs. Activities take into account current objectives, specific demographic targets and unique community features to be considered when providing service in their area. RSVP and station staff work together to develop a range of volunteer opportunities and position descriptions are created for each opportunity. If new volunteer opportunities are added, position descriptions must be developed by the site supervisor and approved by the RSVP director before volunteers can begin performing new activities under RSVP.

When volunteers come on board they receive a copy of their identified volunteer position and a copy signed by the volunteer is kept in their file. Supervisors work with volunteers at their station to ensure they are performing activities as agreed upon. To track their hours and activities, volunteers are required to complete monthly timesheets detailing the date, location, number of hours, activity performed and numbers reached. Volunteers sign and turn in timesheet to their station supervisor and a copy is kept for their file.

Information from monthly timesheets are entered into Volgistics and this information is used by the station supervisor to complete monthly reports to the RSVP director so all activities can be reviewed.

Narratives

Station volunteer activities are also reviewed during monitoring visits to ensure they remain in line with program focus areas and community needs that were to be addressed.

3. Your plan and infrastructure to meet changing community needs to include minimizing disruption to current volunteers as applicable and/or graduating stations as necessary.

ARC is the regional planning, development, and intergovernmental coordination agency on transportation, land use, environmental services, community services and job training for the ten county Atlanta region. In this role, ARC has extensive experience and expertise in assessing community needs, projecting demand, modeling and implementing solutions. As the AAA, ARC regularly develops and pilots innovative approaches to local aging challenges. In determining the framework for the existing RSVP program, information was analyzed from an ARC and the Carl Vinson Institute study which surveyed individuals over 55 years of age in the region to identify characteristics and preferences of the regions older adult population. The analysis shaped initial RSVP work plans, outreach efforts and identified needs for future expansion around health and wellness issues and resources to help individuals age in place. Current program work plans are reviewed by RSVP, Advisory Council members and station staff on an annual basis, to determine their continued relevancy, identify emerging issues, and develop tactics to address these issues.

ARC also relies on resources such as Georgia Division of Aging Services annual town hall forums, focus groups, surveys and interviews across the state of Georgia to collect public input regarding current services, recommended improvements and ideas for new programs. Additional community resources ARC relies upon to help identify critical needs and trends include: internal data regarding most requested needs from the Aging and Disability Resource Connection which receives approximately 40,000 requests for assistance annually; information from local community partners who are experts in their service areas; and community and national research data.

Volunteer feedback from their experiences in the field helps RSVP refine work plans and outreach efforts to better suit target audiences. Volunteers regularly participate in focus groups as new programs are developed and their input has proven highly valuable in developing quality and relevant programming.

Narratives

Consumer evaluation responses play a key role in RSVP program design and implementation. Information collected on what participants liked, didn't like and would like to see added to RSVP programs is regularly reviewed and helps shape the type of information and services RSVP provides.

From the program inception, ARC chose stations with expertise working with older adults, specialized populations and persons with disabilities who had missions that aligned closely with the goals of Metro Atlanta RSVP and program work plans. Because all stations and their volunteer activities are closely aligned with RSVP focus areas and identified community needs ARC does not plan to graduate any stations from Metro Atlanta RSVP.

The RSVP director has been working with each station over the last year around the shift in program work plans to better address CNCS national performance measures. Most station activities already fit well into the new measures. For activities that did not, the RSVP director has been working with station supervisors to adjust activities when possible to fit new measures and work with the volunteers accordingly if additional training was needed. For those activities that could not be adjusted and need to be retired from RSVP, the station supervisors are working with volunteers to find them appropriate opportunities that meet their interest and fit within the new work plans. The director and station supervisors have worked together to explain changes to the volunteers and let them know how much their service is valued and appreciated. If any of the volunteers do not want to take on activities that fall under new work plans, then they are thanked for their service and encouraged to continue doing what they are doing with that particular station, just not as a part of RSVP. Some volunteers may choose to do activities at stations that fit under RSVP work plans and some that may not, but understand only activities under the current work plans can be counted towards their RSVP service.

Moving forward, if at any time RSVP identifies stations that no longer have activities supporting program focus areas and critical community needs the RSVP director would speak with that station to determine if there was a way for them to transition to activities to meet program focus areas. If the station wanted to shift activities, then RSVP would work with them to help implement new activities. If not, then RSVP would graduate them as a station. This would include formal letters to the station and each RSVP volunteer with that station. RSVP would help place any volunteers who wanted to continue RSVP activities at other stations. They would encourage those who were happy in their current activities to stay with the graduated station even though this would mean they would no

Narratives

longer be a part of RSVP.

4. Your organization's track record in the Primary Focus Area, to include, if applicable, measuring performance in the Primary Focus Area.

ARC has been the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for over 30 years. The mission of the AAA is to create communities that support healthy, active, independent lives for older adults through the planning, delivery and coordination of access to information, housing and mobility options, health care and delivery of supportive services. ARC is directly responsible for services such as the regional information and assistance hotline; metro Atlanta RSVP; the regional State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP); Medicaid eligibility and screening; health and wellness programming; nutrition assistance; caregiver support; as well as many other related initiatives.

Volunteers are an integral part of these programs, many of which could not be delivered at current capacity without their assistance. ARC has always incorporated volunteers, but for more than 15 years ARC has been doing this in a deliberate fashion with a structured volunteer program and paid volunteer coordinator. Serving as sponsor for Metro Atlanta RSVP has only helped strengthen the structure of ARC's volunteer services and its policies, processes and procedures to effectively manage and engage volunteers.

Since the program's inception in 2008, the majority of Metro Atlanta RSVP work plans and activities have addressed the primary focus area, Healthy Futures. In addition to tracking outputs such as number of people served and events held, RSVP evaluates educational presentations to measure the impact of the information and material shared as well as the intent of the individual to use the information. Several work plans include evidenced based programs such as the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program and CATCH Healthy Habits and require additional data to be collected. RSVP already has systems and databases set up to help track and compile this data for analysis.

ARC has a history of mobilizing volunteers around important community needs and using outcome measures to track and analyze impact. ARC develops logic models for each program to help ensure that outputs and outcomes are identified and program impact can be communicated clearly and compellingly.

Narratives

Implementation of CATCH Healthy Habits is an example of this type of effort. CATCH is an intergenerational program designed to combat obesity in adults as well as children grades K-5. RSVP volunteers facilitate CATCH sessions once a week for 8 weeks to children at community locations to promote nutrition and fitness education. Since the program's start in 2011, over 80 volunteers worked with nearly 700 children to great success. Data collected from pre and post-tests completed by both volunteers and participants show benefits for all who were involved. Adult participants increased their regular daily intake of fruits and vegetables and were participating in an average of 24% more physical activity in a usual week. Child participants reduced the number of days per week they ate fried or high fat foods; 16% increased the frequency in which they read nutrition labels on foods; and 20% decreased the number of hours per day they were on the computer or playing video games.

5. Your plan and infrastructure to ensure the project is in compliance with the RSVP federal regulations to include establishing an RSVP Advisory Council, ensuring RSVP volunteers are placed in stations that have signed the required MOU, and ensuring all volunteers are eligible to serve in RSVP.

When ARC was awarded RSVP sponsorship in 2008, initial RSVP stations were identified and MOUs were signed by the Executive Director of each station before volunteers were recruited and placed at their locations. As new stations are added to the program, they also must sign a MOU before RSVP volunteers are placed at their location.

Several months prior each MOU's 3 year anniversary, it is reviewed and a new MOU is sent to the expiring station so it can be resigned and the partnership can continue. If the station chooses not to resign the MOU, they would have to be graduated from the program. RSVP volunteers at that station would no longer be able to count activities at that location towards their RSVP service and would have to choose to serve at a different station or continue their service with the graduated station outside of RSVP.

The RSVP director conducts monitoring visits to stations in order to ensure stations are maintaining the required documents and records on file and that volunteers roles are appropriate and do not include prohibited activities as listed in the Station Handbook. When issues are found a letter outlining deficiencies and what must be done to remedy them is sent to the Executive Director and Station

Narratives

Supervisor. The station is then required to submit an action plan detailing how the station will get back in compliance within 30 days. RSVP will follow up at that time to ensure that the station's action plan has been implemented and there are no other issues.

To ensure individuals who express interest in becoming a RSVP volunteer meet eligibility requirements they must go through a volunteer application and screening process. Key criteria potential applicants must meet include: be 55 or older and show proof of residency; complete all required forms; and pass a background check and sex offender screening. Complete criteria and expectations of volunteers are outlined in the Volunteer Handbook. Any volunteer found to have presented eligibility criteria inaccurately will be removed from the program.

Metro Atlanta RSVP has an established Advisory Council made up of a group of individuals that provide broad representation from diverse educational backgrounds, organizations and geographic locations. Members are RSVP volunteers, representatives from stations, local nonprofits and government agencies who have an interest in working with older adults, persons with disabilities and veterans. The Advisory Council meets four times annually and helps to: identify key issues and social concerns affecting health and well-being of older adults and persons with disabilities; identify service area priorities that need to be addressed; help raise visibility of RSVP in the community; obtain community input on RSVP projects; and evaluate the RSVP program, its activities and make recommendations for change and/or improvements.

Organizational Capability

1. Your plan and infrastructure to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight (both financial and in-kind) and day-to-day operational support to ensure compliance with RSVP program requirements (statutes, regulations, and applicable OMB circulars) and to ensure accountability and efficient and effective use of available resources.

ARC has successfully implemented Metro Atlanta RSVP over the last 6 years. During this time, the program has grown substantially and outreach initiatives through this program have received both local and national recognition. Since the program's inception policies and procedures have been in place to ensure that Metro Atlanta RSVP is in compliance with all RSVP program requirements and that program resources are used in an effective, efficient and judicious manner.

Narratives

The Director of the AAA, Kathryn Lawler, is the authorized representative for the project and Kristie Sharp is the RSVP Director and has responsibility for project implementation and resources. ARC conducts annual performance reviews to assess individual staff performance related to their position's goals and objectives.

Outside of ARC, assigned staff at RSVP stations assist with daily program implementation and management. The director will work with each station to support the program's development, appropriate utilization of resources and ongoing identification of tactics to ensure program sustainability.

ARC provides limited mileage and expense reimbursement to volunteers. Volunteers requesting reimbursement submit a monthly expense form in addition to their timesheet and will be reimbursed monthly, up to \$40 for mileage reimbursement and approved expense relating to their volunteer activities. Volunteers who do not turn in time sheets supporting expense requests will not receive reimbursement.

Accounting staff supporting the RSVP project tracks all RSVP program expenditures and provides a monthly report to the RSVP director for review to ensure that resources are being expended and tracked in accordance to what was budgeted. Any program expenditures must be approved by the AAA Director.

ARC has a blanket insurance policy which covers RSVP staff and volunteers. This policy provides coverage required by CNCS for liability and excess auto, but not the full requirement for accident insurance. RSVP contracts the additional accident coverage needed for RSVP volunteers through CIMA to ensure RSVP volunteers have the adequate level of insurance coverage as designated by CNCS.

ARC has been given approval from the Department of Health and Human Services to claim the indirect cost rate documented in the budget. The indirect rate does not include any of the personnel fringe benefits detailed in the budget. This rate includes administrative expenses that cannot be directly charged to any one particular program, such as human resources, communications, facilities management, etc. A detailed calculation of this rate is on file with CNCS.

Narratives

ARC utilizes allowable state and non-federal funds for the grant match. ARC does track time of staff working with RSVP that is not charged directly to the grantee match share. This time is reported as excess support in the budget.

2. Clearly defined staff positions, identification of current staff assigned to the project and how these positions will ensure the accomplishment of the program objectives.

ARC staff involved in the oversight and implementation of metro Atlanta RSVP includes:

Kathryn Lawler is the Director of the AAA and the CNCS Authorized Representative for the program. She has been with ARC for over 10 years. Ms. Lawler will provide guidance and direction to the project and has oversight of the RSVP Program Director. (See attached bio)

Kristie Sharp is the RSVP Director and has been with ARC for 9 years. Ms. Sharp has administered the RSVP program for the past 6 years and provides oversight and management for the project, works with stations, completes required reports and supervises the RSVP coordinators listed below. She works in collaboration with other ARC staff who provide technical assistance, training and administrative support to the program. Ms. Sharp is current president of the Georgia Association for Volunteer Administration. (Resume attached)

Mary Newton is the CATCH and RSVP Coordinator for Fulton County and has been with ARC for 3 years. Ms. Newton provides daily management of these programs, community outreach, training and volunteer recruitment and placement. (Resume attached)

Jennifer Beamer is the RSVP Coordinator for Gwinnett County and has been with ARC for 9 years. Ms. Beamer provides daily management of the program, community outreach, training and volunteer recruitment and placement in Gwinnett County. (Resume attached)

ARC felt it was critical to allocate a significant portion of CNCS grant monies to fund positions for two RSVP coordinators, Jennifer Beamer (part time) and Mary Newton (full time), who provide day to day support directly to the volunteers. RSVP coordinators assist in the development of RSVP signature

Narratives

outreach programs, implementation of evidenced based models and facilitate training on these programs. They also directly manage, coordinate and work collaboratively with volunteers. RSVP coordinators communicate regularly with their assigned volunteers; market educational sessions and outreach opportunities in the community; schedule, assign and coordinate volunteer presentations and events; set up and provide materials to volunteers for their events; provide regular training updates and ongoing material review as many of the outreach issues have regular information changes; and provide ongoing volunteer recognition. ARC feels this support is one of the key reasons volunteers have such a positive experience through their RSVP assignments and ensuring the effective and professional delivery of services provided through Metro Atlanta RSVP.

In addition to the key staff listed above, the GeorgiaCares Coordinator, Resource Development Specialist, and Health and Wellness Coordinator provide time to RSVP to develop and implement volunteer trainings and provide technical assistance to RSVP staff and volunteers on several of the key topic areas RSVP addresses. The Accountant's time is to track RSVP expenses, process staff and volunteer reimbursements and compile information needed for the Federal Financial Report. These staff members time spent on the project is not charged directly to RSVP, but their support is listed as excess support in the budget.

3. Demonstrates organizational capacity to: develop and implement internal policies and operating procedures to provide governance and manage risk, such as accounting, personnel management, and purchasing. Manage capital assets such as facilities, equipment, and supplies.

ARC has a strong infrastructure of financial, programmatic and administrative policies in place to provide governance and manage risk. Examples include written policies and procedures which are included in ARC's employee manual, travel policies, and procurement processes and procedures.

ARC's Director of Support Services and the Financial Services Manager provide daily oversight and fiscal management of all ARC grants and contracts. The Financial Services staff work in various capacities including procurement processing, accounts receivable, and grant and contract administration. Each staff member follows documented policies and procedures developed by the Financial Services Department and approved by the ARC Board.

Narratives

ARC's purchasing procedures follow the guidelines established by the State of Georgia. Capital assets are defined as assets purchased for more than \$5,000.00. The capital assets are captured automatically in CostPoint, the ARC financial software. ARC generally follows a 3-year straight line amortization schedule for capital assets.

4. Demonstrates organizational infrastructure in the areas of robust financial management capacity and systems and past experience in managing federal grants.

ARC has a long history of managing grant funding and has strong systems and policies in place to do so. ARC utilizes the Cost Point accounting software and a cost center is set up in this program specifically for RSVP and tracks all program income and expenditures for the grant. RSVP stations are not required to provide documentation of any non-cash support provided to the program. Local sites are operated out of county and non-profit facilities and the additional support provided to the RSVP program is shared with their operation of other volunteer services. With the exception of volunteer travel which is a cash cost to the program, local sites do not have the financial information or methodology available to report these shared expenses as in-kind donations.

Being the recipient of numerous federal, state and private grant awards, ARC has extensive experience developing and administering program budgets to satisfy grant requirements. ARC has successfully implemented the RSVP grant from CNCS for the past six years and has experience implementing grants with the following Federal agencies: Department of the Interior's US Geological Survey, US Environmental Protection Agency, US Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Aging, US Department of Transportation and US Department of Commerce. In addition ARC administers state funds from the Community Care Act (Georgia's largest Medicaid Waiver Program), other state-funded programs for older adults, and a number of other public and private grants.

Other

n/a

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

n/a