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Executive Summary

An estimated 279 unduplicated RSVP volunteers will serve the communities within Columbia County, Oregon. Some of their activities will include providing meals to homebound or disabled individuals allowing them to continue to live independently and emergency weekend backpacks to low income students who qualify to receive free school lunch; mentoring and tutoring economically disadvantaged students in our local Head Start programs and public schools; working with our local Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Emergency Management and Citizen Corps organizations to assist in preparation and training for natural disasters (flooding, earthquake and fire); and helping to support our active military, Oregon National Guard and their families. Columbia County RSVP will focus primarily on Healthy Futures and supporting our local low income seniors and families that continue to struggle with the depressed economy found within our communities. At the end of the three year grant, it is our goal to increase seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with an improved quality of life and social ties; and increase accessibility of low income individuals to healthy food throughout the year. By providing nutritious meals, individuals increase their mental and physical capabilities and become stronger and better able to take care of themselves. We also see an increase in a child's capability to focus on school work and excel when they are not hungry or worried about food. We will also seek improvement in school readiness at the Head Start level and increased math & reading scores from our students participating in the tutoring/mentoring program. The Columbia County RSVP program will work closely with our local emergency management and preparation agencies to assist local citizens and seniors in preparing for natural disasters and emergencies in our communities. Within Columbia County, there have been several floods, mud slides, windstorms and severe winter weather emergencies in the past 10 years. Due to the highly rural population of the County, it is imperative that our citizens know how to take care of themselves and each other for at least 72 hours in an emergency. Our program will also continue to support our active military and their families by providing emotional support and care packages. We will continue to work with Oregon National Guard members in our local communities on signs of PTSD, housing information and referrals to Veteran's programs. Approximately 31% (85) of our volunteers will be in work plans that result in outcomes. 25% (70) of volunteers will be involved in outcomes for Healthy Futures. Approximately 6% (15) of our volunteers will be involved in outcomes for Education. The CNCS federal investment of \$68,934 will be supplemented by a 30% non-federal match of \$29,700.

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Strengthening Communities

Columbia County is a rural county of 657 square miles located along the Columbia River in NW Oregon. The estimated population of the entire county is just over 49,000 people. Clatsop County borders us to the west and Washington and Multnomah counties border us to the south. There are five main incorporated cities in the Columbia County RSVP service area. St. Helens, found in the south part of the county, is also the county seat and has a population of approximately 12,900, making it the largest city within the county. Just south of St. Helens and bordering Multnomah County is Scappoose with a population of approximately 6,600. The cities of Rainier and Clatskanie are located along the Columbia River to the north of St. Helens and have populations of approximately 1900 and 1700 respectively. The City of Vernonia borders Washington County and is found to the west of St. Helens with a population of approximately 2,100. The remainder of the County's population (23,800) can be found in smaller incorporated cities (i.e. Mist, Prescott, Columbia City) and largely unincorporated rural areas. Of this population, the US Census Bureau estimates that 15.5% (7595) of our citizens are over age 65. Columbia County has a slightly higher percentage of residents 55-74 years old (24% or ~11,760) than the average in Oregon. Our communities are predominately Anglo-American (93.5%).

Columbia County has seen a major increase in businesses closing and industry failing over the past five years. In September 2008, when the national economy took a dramatic downturn, our local communities saw the loss of hundreds of jobs due to company downsizing and closures; the foreclosure rate in Columbia County was the 3rd highest in Oregon in 2010; residential and commercial building has all but stopped and the current unemployment rate is 8.2%--over 1% higher than the national average and .2% higher than the rest of the State of Oregon.

With the increased unemployment rate, we have seen an increase of need at our local food banks and emergency food pantries. Thus, our primary focus is Healthy Futures of our seniors and our low income families with school-aged children. Food costs are ever increasing and the cost of gasoline to shop for those groceries or go on a job search are forcing many people to ask for help. According to statistics from Columbia Pacific Food Bank, in 2010, 27,130 people ate a meal prepared from an emergency food box in Columbia County. In 2012, 33,232 people were served with emergency food boxes from those same agencies. Over 12,000 food boxes were distributed throughout Columbia County in 2012. In addition, over 39,000 meals-on-wheels meals were delivered in 2012. Columbia County has an estimated population of 49,000 and in 2010, Oregon was ranked #2 in the nation for high percentage of hungry citizens. The need for volunteers to get healthy meals to our seniors and

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our low income students is only increasing.

More than 41% (116) of our volunteers will work within our primary focus area, Healthy Futures. Our service activities will include food delivery, emergency food distribution and support and assisting with the maintenance of the local community gardens. 30% (83) of our volunteers will be in work plans involving other community priorities, and the remaining 28% (80) of volunteers will be in work plans in other focus areas of Education, Disaster Services, and Veterans & Military Families.

Meals on Wheels is a very important service in our communities. It not only provides the delivery of a meal to homebound senior citizens and individuals with disabilities, it also provides social interaction and fellowship. These are things that are needed in a person's life to keep them healthy and engaged in the community around them. By providing meals consistently to homebound seniors, our volunteers will become touchstones to the "outside world," and ultimately will become consistent human contact that can support continued social and mental health of the individual. When people feel supported and engaged they will take care of themselves more consistently and will continue to be able to live independently, which is one of national outcome expectations of this service activity. Our volunteers will take periodic surveys with the individuals being served by Meals on Wheels to measure not only their satisfaction with the service but also the perceived improvements to their lives (increased social ties/perceived social support) the service provides. We will also look for their input on how to make improvements to our program.

Each of the five school districts in Columbia County have food banks that provide emergency food. Families are allowed to come to the food bank once each month for a large box of food and one time each week for additional surplus and fresh produce items. Even with these efforts, it often is not enough and families are still hungry. Several other community programs exist to help feed the hungry including community meals where families can come and eat a home-cooked meal around a table, brown bag events where families can come get a bag of groceries, and holiday meal programs. Many local churches also provide emergency food services. Columbia County RSVP volunteers will partner with these agencies and also participate in local "Backpack" programs that provide an emergency backpack filled with food each Friday to low income families with school aged children. According to Oregon Department of Education 3677 children were eligible for free or reduced priced lunches in Columbia County during the 2012-13 school year. That amounts to 47.4% of our school aged children living at poverty level, reliant on the school lunch program. Due to the extreme need in our County, Backpack programs are springing up throughout our communities to provide emergency food to those families and help them have meals over weekends. Without this service, many of our

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kids go hungry when not in school. Our volunteers will assist in collecting the food for these backpacks and distributing them each Friday. It is the goal of this activity to provide increase food security to low income families. When basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter are met, it allows people to focus their energy on other important needs like employment and medical care. By providing these backpacks, we hope to assist our local families by reducing a major stressor in their lives. Children also feel the stress of not having basic needs met and by helping to fill this need, they will be able to focus on their school work and just being a kid.

Our final service activity for our primary focus is for our RSVP volunteers to work within the many community gardens located throughout our County. By providing fresh fruits and vegetables and assisting individuals in obtaining the skills to grow their own gardens, we will be helping our communities be healthier and more self-reliant. It will also help increase food security to our low income families within our communities. And as discussed earlier, when basic needs are met, other important areas of focus can be addressed. We will track interactions with those receiving the fresh produce as well as any participants in classes taught by our Master Gardeners throughout Columbia County.

According to the State of Oregon's District AMO (Annual Measurable Report) for the 2011-12 school year, many Columbia County students performed lower than the state average for reading and math. The percent of students that met or exceeded the state standards on Oregon statewide assessments were significantly lower in many cases. Statistics show the following:

Grade 3 reading -- St Helens students scored 65% compared to state average of 72%

Grade 3 math -- St Helens and Clatskanie students scored 57% compared to state average of 65%

Grade 4 reading -- St Helens students scored 62% compared to state average of 76%

Grade 4 math -- St Helens students scored 47% compared to state average of 67%

Grade 5 reading -- Rainier students scored 51% and Vernonia scored 64% compared to state average of 71%

Grade 5 math -- Vernonia students scored 39%, Rainier scored 44% and Scappoose scored 51% compared to state average of 61%

Grade 7 math -- Clatskanie students scored 42% compared to state average of 64%

Grade 8 math -- Clatskanie students scored 32% compared to state average of 66%

Columbia county also has a higher than average population (13.8 in Clatskanie, 14.4% in Vernonia, 14.4% in Rainier, and 14.3% in St. Helens) for Special Education students than the state average of 13.2%. Additionally, almost half of Columbia County students are on the free or reduced lunch

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program.

Schools have experienced shrinking budgets for several years resulting in larger classrooms and fewer classroom assistants. These children need more reading assistance than their classroom teachers can provide. Tutors are needed to provide individualized attention and age appropriate reading instructions. RSVP volunteers will tutor at-risk students in grade K-12 primarily in reading and math activities at volunteer stations in each school district in Columbia County-- St Helens, Scappoose, Vernonia, Rainier, and Clatskanie. The need for community volunteers to serve as tutors is important to not only help raise reading and math achievement levels but also to increase students' self esteem and success in future academic performance.

We plan to have 10 RSVP volunteers tutoring students at 5 volunteer stations (e.g., elementary schools, libraries, after school programs) throughout the County. It is our goal to reach least at 50 underachieving students in areas of cognition, language and verbal skills, spelling, math, and social/emotional development. Activities the volunteers will participate in include reading to and listening to students read, working with words, letters, spelling, phonics, comprehension, math, writing skills and homework completion. Volunteers will commit to serving at least 2 hour per week working one-on-one with students or in small groups. Each volunteer will work with the same children throughout the school year giving these children individualized, consistent attention to bring about an increase in their academic skills. Volunteers will check in with teachers each week and with program staff to answer questions, resolve problems, receive feedback and teaching instructions. Training in literacy and tutoring techniques will be provided to our volunteers by RSVP staff, support literacy professionals, and school personnel. Curriculum materials will be provided by the schools. Teachers will identify those students needing additional attention and assign an RSVP volunteer to those students. Schools will provide meals to RSVP volunteers serving at least 3 hours per day and transportation/mileage reimbursement will be available to RSVP volunteers as budget allows. There will be a pre-service orientation and site visits by RSVP staff. Volunteers will participate in positive behavior motivation techniques used by the school district.

Because of the consistent, individualized attention, students' academic performance will improve & their self-esteem and confidence will increase, behavior will improve and attendance will increase. Another area where we see a need for volunteers is with our local Head Start programs. Head Start provides early learning opportunities for disadvantaged and low-income children. Columbia County has 3 facilities serving our most at-risk children. Children in Head Start need a lot of support for social and emotional development and often don't have extended family members to help. Columbia

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County also has a high percentage of children that identify English as their second language. These children can benefit from additional attention to support their social/emotional development, academic skills and ensure that they arrive in kindergarten ready to learn. RSVP volunteers will become another consistent person in the child's life and another adult they can trust.

Five RSVP volunteers will assist in classrooms at 3 volunteer stations (Head Start) with at least 30 underachieving students. They will work on areas of Cognition, Language and verbal skills, and social/emotional development. Activities will include reading to students, social interaction, letter and number recognition, phonics, and writing skills.

The volunteers will serve at least two hours per week during the calendar year and/or summer school. Training will be provided by RSVP staff and Head-Start staff personnel. Curriculum materials will be provided by the schools. Teachers will identify students needing additional attention. Schools will provide meals to RSVP volunteers serving at least 3 hours per day and transportation/mileage reimbursement will be available to RSVP volunteers as budget allows. Volunteers will participate in positive behavior motivation techniques used by school staff. There will be a pre-service orientation and site visits by RSVP staff.

At least 30 students will receive one-on-one or small group attention from the RSVP volunteer at least once weekly. Because of the consistent, individualized attention, positive social interaction will increase and their behavior in the classroom will improve. Students' self-esteem and confidence will rise. As a result, students' academic performance will improve, increasing the likelihood of success in kindergarten.

RSVP additionally will mentor disadvantaged students in grade K-12 at 5 volunteer stations in Columbia County. The need for community volunteers to mentor is to help raise reading and math achievement levels, increase self-esteem & confidence, and succeed in future academic performance. Due to budget cuts, Columbia County schools have had to cut counselor positions & classroom aides, and class sizes have increased drastically. All this reduces the availability of someone to help a child emotionally. Many students do not have extended family networks to rely on for assistance and the extra support the RSVP volunteers offer is important. RSVP volunteers become a consistent person in the child's life and another adult they can trust.

Ten RSVP volunteers will mentor at least 300 disadvantaged students at 5 volunteer stations (e.g., K-12 schools, libraries, after school programs). Activities include reading to students, assisting with homework, playing games at recess, engaging in math or literacy games, and supporting emotional development.

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The RSVP volunteers will serve at least 2 hours per week during the calendar year and/or summer school. Training in literacy and tutoring techniques will be provided by RSVP staff, support literacy professionals, and school personnel. Curriculum materials will be provided by the schools and they will provide meals to RSVP volunteers serving at least 3 hours per day. Transportation/mileage reimbursement will be available to RSVP volunteers as budget allows. There will be a pre-service orientation and site visits.

Our RSVP mentors become consistent people in our students' lives and another adult they can trust. Because of the individualized attention, students' self-esteem and confidence will rise. As a result, students' academic performance will improve and attendance will increase. It is our hope to see all children succeed in school and we hope to be able to provide that support and assistance so many of our children need.

One of the other focus areas that Columbia County RSVP will work within is supporting active military personnel. St. Helens is home to Oregon National Guard Detachment 1, Company B, 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry unit and armory and Scappoose, Rainier and Clatskanie support local VFW chapters. It is our intention to assign 13% of our volunteers to providing assistance in coordinating needs for military personnel and their families pre-deployment including assisting veterans with access to educational benefits and services. The current RSVP Veteran's program has been providing training to the local Oregon National Guard members on how to access Veteran's Administration disability compensation and required documentation. We will continue to support our local veterans with educational programs as needed. We will track those encounters by utilizing sign in sheets at each training and by requesting feedback surveys following each training session. Additionally, we will develop a "care package" system for our active military personnel currently stationed overseas. We will look to local knitting groups to provide beanies and mittens, among other hand-made goods, to send to our troops. Care packages will also include things like local newspapers, newsletters, magazines and sweets. These packages will not just be sent at Christmas time but at different times throughout the year to continue to show support for our active military.

There are 5,569 veterans (14.8% of the population over age 18) living in Columbia County. In addition, there are estimated to be at least 100 homeless veterans living in the hills and woods surrounding the City of Vernonia. The public transit system is limited or unavailable to many rural residents and about 45% of the county's population live outside the incorporated areas. Two of the most rural senior centers in Rainier and Clatskanie have expressed a desire to be able to provide rides for veterans to the closest VA Hospital located in Portland, OR and other medical appointments.

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These agencies have been unable to provide these rides due to the high cost of gasoline. Rainier is approximately 52 miles from Portland and Clatskanie is 62 miles. At the current cost of gasoline at \$3.69 per gallon, and considering the average car getting 30 MPG, it would cost a veteran over \$15 in gas plus parking fees to drive to Portland for a medical appointment from Clatskanie. From Rainier it would cost almost \$13 in gas plus parking fees for one round-trip. RSVP volunteers are needed to provide medical transportation for veterans. We will strive to provide ten RSVP volunteers who will provide at least 50 veterans rides to medical appointments throughout the year.

Columbia County RSVP will also be working within the Disaster Services Focus Area. According to the St. Helens Community Emergency Response team (CERT), Chief Terry Moss of the St. Helens Police Department reported that "Due to limited funding, it would be beneficial for volunteers to be trained in disaster preparedness so they can help in an emergency. When disaster occurs, they will have the training and knowledge of what to do. Immediate action is required to save lives, protect property and the environment". CERT needs additional volunteers and Columbia County Emergency Management is currently recruiting for an Americorp volunteer that will work actively in outreach activities that could interface with our Columbia County RSVP volunteers. With the help of trained RSVP volunteers, the agencies will be better able to implement disaster preparation and relief activities to our rural communities.

20 RSVP volunteers will train and be ready to respond in emergency situations where needed as directed by the fire and police departments. The volunteers will assist local fire and police in situations requiring traffic control (e.g. Hood to Coast, Maritime Festival, 4th of July) and they will staff the first aid booth as needed at community events (e.g. Columbia County Fair, Rainier Days). Per Holly Haebe with CERT, there is a huge need for additional volunteers for these events because traffic control covers a lot of territory, and manning the first aid booth requires commitments involving long hours over several days. In case of emergency, RSVP volunteers would be trained and available to assist emergency personnel. RSVP volunteers will participate in Preparedness Fairs in Vernonia and Clatskanie demonstrating how to be prepared for emergencies and different ways to store water. Five new volunteers will complete a 6-week training to become a CERT member. Volunteers will participate in quarterly meetings and take advantage of additional trainings as available. RSVP volunteers will interface with Columbia County Emergency Management's Americorp volunteer. It is expected that the 20 RSVP volunteers will serve 1000 hours with CERT and Columbia County Emergency Management.

Columbia County RSVP has identified several areas where there is a general community need. We

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will participate in the following areas providing support:

The Columbia County Courthouse is located in the City of St. Helens, OR. The juvenile department is in the historic courthouse located adjacent to the current courthouse. Due to reduced funding and forced Friday furloughs, the courthouse has limited staff and it is difficult for visitors to locate departments and negotiate the courthouse. Volunteers are needed to provide general reception duties at the Columbia County Courthouse. According to Jean Ripa with Columbia County Human Resources, "RSVP is so important to the county". RSVP volunteers will provide general reception duties at the main entrance of the courthouse and in the juvenile department of the historic courthouse. RSVP volunteers will provide directions to the general public and answer various questions from visitors.

With the closing of Columbia Learning Center in 2012, Columbia County was left without a location seniors could go for internet support and education. Having the knowledge of how to negotiate the internet and use email and other social site such as Facebook and Twitter, seniors are able to remain in their home and feel more connected to family and friends. According to Lisa Bush with Seniors & People with Disabilities, "Seniors have a target on their backs and need to be careful to avoid internet scams targeting seniors." One RSVP volunteer will be available at the Columbia Learning Center location in the library one day each week to provide general internet support to seniors. Seniors can request special training on Microsoft Windows, sending emails, internet connection issues, and navigating the internet. The Columbia County RSVP volunteer will also provide a free class once a month for seniors covering a wide range of topic around internet education (e.g. internet safety, internet scams targeting seniors, viruses, etc.).

Since 2000, the population for Columbia County has grown by 14%. Columbia County has a slightly higher percentage of residents age 55-74 years old than Oregon statewide. Seniors age 55 and older make up 29% of the population of Columbia County. As of 2011 there were 6843 seniors age 65 and over living in Columbia County and approximately 2489 with a disability. An estimated 1800 households with individuals age 65 and older are living alone. There are five main cities in Columbia County that have senior centers located within their areas. Last year, those senior centers provided 32,530 congregate meals on site. Congregate meals support Aging in Place objectives because it allows seniors to remain living in their home and have a place they can go to eat meals on a regular basis. It alleviates boredom and helps seniors feel more connected to others and less lonely or bored because they are able to interact with others. 25 RSVP volunteers will serve at five senior centers providing daily congregate meals. Duties will include meal preparation, set up, serving and clean up.

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It is expected that those volunteers will contribute 4000 hours of service per year.

A main source of income for the Senior Centers within Columbia County them is sales of hand-crafted items to help fund Meals on Wheels and Congregate Meal programs. Without these items, they would be unable to provide meals to homebound seniors and individuals with disabilities or regular congregated meals to hundreds of seniors locally. 20 RSVP volunteers will sew quilts, knit hats, slippers, and create other craft items to sell at the senior centers. Surplus items could also be included in the care packages RSVP volunteers send to active military members. We expect that these volunteers will contribute 1000 hours of service within this activity.

In addition to hand-crafted items, St. Helens and Scappoose have very successful thrift stores and Rainier runs a gift shop. All area senior centers also have games nights (e.g. bingo, bunco, etc.) Sales at these stores and revenue from game nights are the major source of funding for Meals on Wheels and Congregate Meal programs. Without these projects, area senior centers would be unable to provide the 39,440 meals on wheels to homebound seniors and individuals with disabilities or 32,530 congregated meals to hundreds of seniors locally in 2012. 30 RSVP volunteers will assist in the running of senior center thrift stores, gift shops and game nights. Duties will include pricing, stocking, loading, registering and assisting customers, etc. They will contribute 4000 hours of service each year.

And finally, Columbia County RSVP does not have any budgeted administrative staff. Volunteers are needed to perform miscellaneous office duties and provide administrative support to the Director. Two RSVP volunteers will assist in administrative duties for RSVP director. Duties include typing, filing, calling volunteers, assisting in event organization, etc. They will contribute 48 hours of service per year.

As an emergency response agency, Columbia River Fire & Rescue (CRFR) currently has a system in place that safeguards data and citizen privacy. Backup systems are in use to eliminate loss of data and security breaches. Columbia Count RSVP will utilize those same systems provided by their sponsor to keep their data collection secure and safe. CRFR will continue to provide some administrative support to the RSVP program and assist in capturing and evaluating data for the National Performance Measure outcomes.

Recruitment and Development

Columbia County RSVP volunteer recruiting infrastructure is already very strong. We are currently recruiting through newspaper ads and articles, newsletters, word of mouth, sponsor & RSVP website, sponsor social media and presentations at local civic organizations, retirement homes, church groups, senior centers, and retirement organizations. Both the sponsor (CRFR) and RSVP staff are very active

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in local volunteer & civic organizations and state committees and serve on various boards, advisory councils, and committees throughout Columbia County and the State of Oregon. Columbia County RSVP is highly visible and respected within the communities it serves. Prospective and current volunteers know about our high quality of volunteer placement and management. Volunteers are interviewed individually before they are placed at a station. It is our goal to place each volunteer with an agency that can utilize their special skills and life experience to meet the goals of both the volunteer and the station. The volunteer stations are also interviewed extensively about their volunteer needs, their experience with volunteers, and their job descriptions. Volunteers and volunteer station managers are then brought together to solidify the match. It is very important that the volunteer and the station match interests, skills, and work schedules. RSVP and the volunteer stations can work together to provide a high quality experience that enriches the lives of the volunteers while meeting critical community needs.

With more than 8% of our County still unemployed, Columbia County RSVP will look to our local DHS Office and Emergency Food Banks to assist us with providing sensitivity training and understanding for our volunteers, especially those working within our primary focus area of Healthy Futures. The current RSVP Director is a volunteer for the DHS Citizen Review Board. She is a court-appointed volunteer serving on a Board that reviews cases of children in substitute care for over six months. Working with DHS representatives keeps her in touch with the community needs, especially those relating to some of our most vulnerable citizens--kids in foster care and kids of incarcerated parents. She receives annual training that helps her to understand the plight of poverty and hunger in our communities and how it affects the social, emotional and physical development of our children. Her experience in this area will only strengthen our program as she will be able to share her knowledge and training with our volunteers. Local food banks also provide training for volunteers on generational poverty and safe food handling. As a part of the development of the RSVP program, the current Director will be providing a periodic newsletter that will be sent to our volunteers and our volunteer stations that will cover a wide range of topics. It will include information on current trends that will keep our volunteers informed about "hot topics" and serve as ongoing training for their duties.

Columbia County RSVP has developed outreach and training models within our organization that are flexible, challenging, and attractive to the younger or male volunteer. These programs are a tremendous benefit to the communities we serve and give our program high visibility and credibility. Columbia County RSVP utilizes a team model. Work stations have one or more team leaders that are

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trained in recognizing volunteers, recruiting techniques, dealing with a diverse population, managing volunteers, and required reporting. The team leaders report to the designated volunteer coordinator, the station supervisor, and the RSVP Director. The team approach is an excellent tool and opens up communication at all levels.

RSVP volunteers build capacity for their stations by recruiting additional community members. Word of mouth is one of the strongest advertising methods we have found within our communities. Seniors gather for fellowship and exchange information and opinions on a more face to face basis. According to 2010 Customer Service statistics, people who are happy with service they are receiving will tell 4 to 6 other individuals. We are a service organization and we look at our volunteers as our customers that we serve. If we are strong and committed to them, their needs and the volunteer stations, they are likely to tell others about their experience and encourage them to participate. As we look to the future, we will advertise more using social media. More and more mature adults are using social media to communicate and stay in contact with the local community. Reaching out to prospective volunteers through social media will become more and more important as time goes by.

Because there is a high percentage on non-English speaking and English as a second language students in Head Start and the local elementary schools, we will try to recruit volunteers that are bi-lingual and those that are sensitive to the needs of these students. Positive male role models are also needed in the schools to work with students without any male role models at home so extra efforts will be made to recruit senior men to tutor and mentor in the schools. Seniors with disabilities will be encouraged to volunteer and every attempt will be made to accommodate them. Due to the RSVP Director's past experience working with Foster Grandparents, she has a good relationship developed with the local school districts. The local schools appreciate and encourage seniors with disabilities to volunteer. Kids in the schools have proven to be very understanding and gentle with seniors with disabilities of all kinds such as hearing, speaking and mobility issues. It teaches kids tolerance and compassion for others. Kids love the volunteer and love helping them.

RSVP volunteers are currently recognized in a variety of ways. The school volunteers are recognized each month at special training. They are recognized by school staff and students at various times throughout the school year. School mentors are also recognized through press releases and by the school administrators and board members annually. All RSVP volunteers are recognized by our sponsor, advisory council, RSVP staff and local dignitaries at an annual recognition event. Volunteers are recognized at their work sites at least once a year by the RSVP staff and work station staff. Volunteers are treated with respect and appreciation daily at their work sites. Special training and

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technical assistance to project staff, volunteers, volunteer station supervisors, and community participation groups are provided throughout the year. Some of these special training and technical assistance are: mediation classes, managing volunteers, recognizing volunteers, school mentoring training, internet use and safety for seniors and emergency preparedness training.

For years we have partnered with Columbia River PUD, Columbia County, the fairgrounds, public transportation, and others to put on an annual volunteer recognition event. The 'My Fair Lady' pageant is held each year on opening day (Senior's Day) of the Columbia County Fair in July. Five 'princesses' are selected from many outstanding volunteers nominated from each of the five cities in Columbia County. At the fair, a queen is crowned and all of the volunteers are honored for their service to their communities. Other seniors are encouraged to volunteer and applications for RSVP are made available to recruit new volunteers. The local PUD pays for all expenses of hosting the pageant and provides multiple press releases of the volunteers honored in the local newspapers. We intend to expand this program to include the My Fair Lady court in more activities throughout the year to create more exposure and enthusiasm for volunteering in Columbia County.

Additionally, our RSVP Director will be implementing a new recognition program that will utilize a "Publisher Clearing House" type reward system. Each month a volunteer will be randomly selected from the pool of volunteers nominated from each of the volunteer stations as outstanding volunteers. Upon selection, the RSVP director, Advisory Council, sponsor and representatives of the "My Fair Lady" court will arrive at the volunteer station on a day the volunteer is normally expected to work and will present the volunteer with a special balloon bouquet, certificate of appreciation, flowers and other special items donated by local businesses. Cookies or some other treat will also be brought to recognize the other volunteers at the station. A press release will be sent to all local newspapers to also recognize these volunteers publicly within their communities. We are very excited to implement this new system of recognition as it will also serve indirectly as a tool to recruit new volunteers.

Program Management

Columbia County RSVP will work with the program sponsor, Columbia River Fire & Rescue (CRFR), and the RSVP Advisory Council to review and discuss goals, objectives and weaknesses on a monthly basis at each Advisory Council meeting. Our RSVP Director will visit each volunteer station monthly to discuss challenges each Station Manager is facing and assist in providing information to correct those challenges.

Each volunteer station will work under an MOU that will outline the approved activities for that station and will include signed verification of restrictions. Each Station Manager will sign off on a

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verification form after receiving the RSVP handbook and a simplified process for reporting errors or concerns will be outlined to each volunteer. Columbia County RSVP believes in open communication and each concern will be heard equally and addressed as quickly as possible. Compliance issues will be resolved immediately and corrective action, including training or re-training, will take place.

Because of the program's affiliation with the largest fire district in Columbia County, this program will be informed at higher levels as to the changing needs of our communities. CRFR is intimately involved with the Columbia County Board of Commissioners and regularly attends meetings with emergency management agencies located within our five base communities. CRFR is also one of the first agencies notified when additional residential building or commercial expansion is proposed. Columbia County RSVP will be at a certain advantage to be so close to the knowledge of the economic changes within the County.

Additionally, the RSVP Director is a former Title I Math & Reading Assistant and former Foster Grandparent Program Director. She has many contacts within the local school districts that can assist her in assessing the changing needs of our low income students. We will have the ability to forecast changes in our communities with these substantial contacts as well as have immediate access to data effecting our work plans or outcomes. She is also a volunteer for the DHS Citizen Review Board as a court appointed volunteer that reviews cases of children in substitute care over six months. She receives annual training and is in contact with DHS representatives which keeps her in touch with the community needs of our most vulnerable populations.

Columbia County RSVP already has a strong presence in the Healthy Futures focus area and we have plans to make it even stronger. With new standards being implemented, we have found that there are many activities that directly and indirectly support feeding our low income families, disabled and homebound seniors. We have many volunteers working at stations that either provide emergency food to low income individuals or generate revenue to purchase food for local emergency food programs. With the expectation of expanding into the weekend back pack program and community meals programs, our effect on community hunger will be strong and immediate. By taking care of basic needs for our children, disabled and homebound seniors, we are creating stronger communities focused on compassion and caring. Additionally, each year the Program Sponsor organizes and participates in the local Holiday Hope/Share & Care program that provides holiday meals (and toys) to local residents. This program is 100% donation based and works hand in hand with the local food banks, civic groups and community business owners. Columbia County RSVP will create a partnership with all local programs and recruit volunteers specifically to assist in filling this need

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during the holidays.

As required, Columbia County RSVP has an established Advisory Council which meets on a monthly basis. These meetings are integral to the program's success. Advisory Council members solicit donations and help the Director identify emerging needs within our communities. The RSVP Director plans on creating three committees within the Advisory Council to assist with the implementation of stated goals: Marketing, Volunteer Recognition, and Ways & Means (fundraising). They will also be involved with more volunteer recognition as they go out to the volunteer stations to present the monthly "Publisher Clearing House" winner with their recognition items.

Columbia County RSVP also has in place Memorandums of Understanding at each volunteer station. They will be reviewed and updated as needed and each volunteer station evaluated on an annual basis. Should a volunteer station find that it is struggling to maintain its volunteer population, the RSVP program will assist in targeted recruitment or finding another volunteer station which to transfer volunteers and graduate the station. It is our desire to keep volunteers engaged and enjoying their service. It is the reason they sacrifice their time to our program. It is our duty to do what we can to not only show them our appreciation but to also challenge them and make their time away from home and their families fulfilling.

Within the application process, volunteer eligibility will be established and verified. Because of the Program's affiliation with so many other agencies, should a volunteer be ineligible to participate in the Columbia County RSVP program, the Program Director will have a bank of references and placement ideas for participants. We also expect to receive references from those agencies (CERT, CRFR Volunteer Firefighters, Citizen Corps, etc.) that have been contacted by volunteers but don't qualify to be included in their program but would qualify to be within ours. By networking in our small communities and within the County government, we will be able to have access to a significant amount of volunteers to fill our needs.

Organizational Capability

The mission statement for Columbia River Fire & Rescue is, "Columbia River Fire & Rescue protects and improves the quality of our citizens' lives by providing life safety and emergency services in their time of need. We dedicate ourselves to preventing harm to people and property by community involvement and education in all areas of fire prevention and emergency preparedness. We respond to all calls for service in a competent and friendly manner with the goal of minimizing losses and aiding in the restoration of lives. We find solutions to community concerns and problems by doing the right thing, the right way, at the right time."

Narratives

Columbia County RSVP has been in existence since 1971 and Columbia River Fire & Rescue (CRFR) has been the sponsor of RSVP for the past 15+ years and has fully integrated the RSVP program into their systems. The RSVP Director is provided office space at the Administrative office and CRFR supports the program with administrative oversight and support, financial tracking, auditing and reporting, safety and training. She is in daily contact with the District Finance Director, Fire Chief and Administrative staff. CRFR's current Finance Director has over 10-years experience in writing and managing State and Federal grants. She has assisted the District in obtaining over \$1.3 million in SAFER grants over the past two years. The District also completes an annual audit which reviews all financial transactions for accuracy and consistency. CRFR maintains and reviews annually a Fiscal Policy & Procedure manual. Additionally, the District Board of Directors review all financial statements on a monthly basis and are directly involved in policy making and approval.

Annual performance reviews are completed for each employee on the anniversary of their hire and identify the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and achievements District employees face each year. Goals are set by the employee and their supervisor and periodic monitoring takes place to make sure the goals are both achievable and sustainable.

The current RSVP Director is a former Foster Grandparent Director with experience as a Title I Math & Reading Assistant. Additionally, she serves as a member of a DHS Citizen Review Board. She has many resources within the local school district, DHS Office, Columbia County and within the CNCS community. Her enthusiasm for supporting her volunteers and local communities is refreshing and exciting. We look forward to where she can take this program.

Columbia County RSVP recently completed a compliance site visit in June of 2013. Two minor issues were identified and corrected resulting in 100% compliance with current standards. CRFR and Columbia County RSVP will work tirelessly to maintain that compliance as well as achieve to exceed expectations of the outcomes in the work plans that follow.

Columbia River Fire & Rescue has the capacity to implement, manage, and sustain the work plans, goals and requirements of Columbia County RSVP. As a combined volunteer-career District, they have extensive experience and a successful track record with managing volunteer programs. In small communities such as Columbia County, the largest part of the fire service is made up of volunteers. Currently, CRFR has 50 active volunteer firefighters. CRFR volunteers and paid staff provide support to a number of local community events including the Columbia County Fair, Rainier Days in the Park, Columbia County Relay for Life and St. Helens River City Days, to name a few. Annually the crews go out to the local schools and teach fire safety to our students.

Narratives

As an emergency response agency, Columbia River Fire & Rescue (CRFR) currently has a system in place that safeguards data and citizen privacy. Backup systems are in use to eliminate loss of data and security breaches. Columbia Count RSVP will utilize those same systems provided by their sponsor to keep their data collection secure and safe. CRFR will continue to provide administrative support to the RSVP program and assist in capturing and evaluating data for the National Performance Measure outcomes.

Columbia River Fire & Rescue and Columbia County RSVP look forward to continuing this program, growing it and making it stronger. Thank you for considering our application.

Other

None required at this time

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

Not Applicable