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Executive Summary

An estimated 212 New River Community Action (NRCA) RSVP volunteers will serve Floyd and Giles Counties, Virginia. Some of their activities will include providing food and transportation to homebound and/ or older adults and those with disabilities, tutoring and mentoring in local schools, collecting and recycling materials, assisting with disaster preparation, and increasing capacity through blood drive support. The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures. At the end of the three-year grant, NRCA RSVP anticipates the following outcomes: 1) 50 Head Start children will demonstrate gains in school readiness; 2) parents of 60 low-income school-age children will report increased household food security. The CNCS federal investment of \$71,807 will be supplemented by \$18,954 from county governments and \$11,834 from other non-federal resources.

Strengthening Communities

The New River Valley is a 1,458 square mile region located in the eastern United States along the New River in the Southwestern part of Virginia. The New River is the third oldest-river in the world and the only non-tidal river that crosses the Appalachian Mountains. The valley is part of a bigger region called the Great Valley which extends as far north as Pennsylvania and is bordered by the Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains. The New River Valley is made up of four counties including Montgomery, Pulaski, Floyd and Giles and the City of Radford. According to the 2010 census it is the home to approximately 165,146 residents. The area is fortunate to have three colleges: Virginia Tech, Radford University and New River Community College.

NRCA's Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) serves both Floyd and Giles Counties in rural southwest Virginia. NRCA's RSVP was established in 1974, under a grant awarded by the federal agency, ACTION. The sponsorship of the program was initially Giles County but transferred into NRCA. In 1993, ACTION was adapted into the CNCS. The RSVP Program helps strengthen NRCA by demonstrating competitive programming that offers community capacity building which promotes the strengthening of skills, competencies, well-being and abilities of people and the communities they serve. A Floyd County RSVP volunteer that has been in service for more than 20 years comments, "I believe RSVP is a great program in Floyd County for senior citizens. Many of us are here because of a loss of a spouse and are lonely looking for something to fill the emptiness. RSVP has many stations that contribute much to the county. Some of these are Christmas for Children, Backpack Program,

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The Humane Society and Bloodmobile. I have volunteered at some of these and it is very rewarding to see how volunteering has helped many people. The one that means the most to me is the Bloodmobile because of personal reasons. My husband was a cancer patient and received lots of blood during his illness. I wanted to do something to assure other people would receive blood if needed. Without RSVP many people might not have the opportunity of feeling useful to society and able to help others."

Floyd County is nestled high atop a plateau covering of 381 square miles of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Buffalo Mountain is the highest point in the county which reaches a towering 3,971 feet and is one of the most significant natural areas in the state of Virginia. It is home to thirteen rare plants, three rare animals, and six significant natural communities. The combination of high-elevation, wind-exposed openings at the summit, and magnesium rich soils make it unlike any place else in the Commonwealth. In fact it is the home of the only known location in the world for a mealy bug called *Puto kosztarabi* making it a place like nowhere else in the world. Floyd County with ten other counties make up part of The Crooked Road Music Trail which serves to generate tourism and economic development in the Appalachian region of Southwestern of Virginia by focusing on the area's unique musical heritage. There is a growing population in Floyd consists of 15,279 individuals. Of those individuals 34.96% are seniors aged 55 and older and of that 47.73% are male and 52.27% are female with the breakdown by race being 96.9% Caucasian, 1.9% African American, and 1.4 % American Indian, Asian or Pacific Islander. Employment opportunities are inadequate in this rural, mountainous region. The median household income is \$44,188 with 13.5% living in poverty (US Census 2010) and an unemployment rate of 5.7% in May 2013 (Bureau of Labor Statistics [SAIPE] 2012) and a senior unemployment rate of 0.45% (Virginia Employment Commission August 2013).

Giles County is made up of 360 square miles of which 357 miles is land and the remaining three miles water. Giles County is considered part of the Blacksburg, Christiansburg and Radford Metropolitan Statistical Area and, as of 2010, the county's population was 17,197 with 5,741 seniors aged 55 and older. Of those, 46.14% are male, 53.86 are female with the breakdown by race being 97.5% Caucasian, 1.6% African American, and 1.1% American Indian, Asian or Pacific Islander. Giles County is the location of Mountain Lake, one of only two natural fresh water lakes in Virginia. The Lake drains into Little Stony Creek, which passes over the Cascades, a spectacular waterfall, before reaching the New River. Outdoor recreation is overflowing with thirty-seven miles of the New River

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flowing through the heart of the county as well as 92 square miles of Jefferson National Forest and over 50 miles of the Appalachian Trail. The Median household income is \$40,773 with 16.1% living in poverty and an unemployment rate of 6.1% in May 2013 (Bureau of Labor Statistics [SAIPE] 2012) and a senior unemployment rate of 0.45% (Virginia Employment Commission August 2013). Employment opportunities are few in both counties with people having to result in traveling to work in nearby jurisdictions. VA Tech and Radford University are two major employers outside the Counties.

Seniors age 65 and older represent 18.2% of the population in Floyd County, with 10.5% of seniors living in poverty. Seniors represent 18.5% of the Giles County population, with 12.3% of them living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010 Data Release, December 2011). Both Floyd and Giles Counties population are made up of 12% veterans is which higher than the national average of 10.1% (NRCA Needs Assessment). According to the Social Security Administration there are 324 individuals living in Floyd and 567 individuals living in Giles counties that are disabled. The 2012 New River Valley Livability Initiative Interim Report indicated both Floyd and Giles Counties face aging populations and workforces that will place strains on services. Employment, transportation, communication and housing top the low-income needs identified by NRCA.

The current sponsor of the RSVP in Floyd and Giles Counties is New River Community Action (NRCA), an agency serving low-income individuals in the New River Valley region of southwestern Virginia. During program year July 1, 2012 -- June 30, 2013, NRCA served 12,000 persons in Radford City, Floyd, Giles, Montgomery and Pulaski Counties, with 1,055 of the total served residing in Floyd County. The 1,055 Floyd County clients resided in 488 households with reported incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (\$47,100 for a family of four), with 275 of those households having incomes at or below 100% poverty (\$23,550 for a family of four). During the same period, NRCA served 1,196 Giles County clients residing in 501 households with reported incomes at or below 200% poverty, with 431 of those households having incomes at or below 100% poverty.

NRCA RSVP will serve Floyd and Giles Counties as well as impact lives of residents in need with the placement of 212 volunteers in service opportunities. The CNCS Primary Focus Area concentration is Healthy Futures. The volunteers will assist with food delivery to homebound and older adults through Plenty! Plenty!'s purpose is to nourish the community and feed hungry neighbors by growing and

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sharing fresh food while preventing obesity. RSVP volunteers will also assist with transporting homebound individuals, older adults, individuals with disabilities, and cancer patients to doctors' appointments through Med-Ride, the American Cancer Society. Volunteers will transport local veterans to the Veterans Administration Hospital in nearby Salem, VA to access medical care. These services will allow individuals to remain living independently for longer than they would be able to without RSVP volunteers as well as increase needed social support and community ties. Volunteers will work with the Sheriff's department through TRIAD focusing on educating the community and older population on local scams, theft and prescription drug seekers. This financial education service will help our seniors remain in their homes longer by providing knowledge necessary to keep them financially stable so they can remain independent. Volunteers can also have the opportunity to serve on the SALT council that advises the local TRIAD meetings. RSVP volunteers will work with three local hospices - Carilion, Intrepid Home Health, and Amedisys - to provide respite services to caregivers of homebound disabled individuals. Volunteers help combat hunger throughout both counties by supporting five food pantries located at NRCA's Emergency Assistance Programs and at faith-based organizations. This will prove to help increase food security within households that may otherwise go without food. To alleviate long-term hunger, RSVP volunteers will work in the community garden at Plenty! and provide meals to low-income school-age children through the Backpack Programs. The Backpack Programs improve nutrition of children enrolled in free and reduced-cost school lunch programs by increasing their food supply while they are at home. RSVP volunteers will work through the Agency on Aging to help distribute health education materials for insurance, health care access and other health benefits. Volunteers will work at the Floyd County High School as coaches promoting physical activity to reduce childhood obesity. According to the Virginia Atlas of Community Health (2010), 28% of Floyd County's school children ages 10-17 are obese, compared to the state's rate of 22%.

NRCA RSVP volunteers will also serve in other focus areas including Disaster Preparedness and Response in which volunteers will work with the Amateur Radio Stations and be prepared to respond in the event of a disaster. In the Education focus area, RSVP will place volunteers in local Head Start Programs where they will assist in classrooms of economically disadvantaged children. The extra assistance within the classrooms will help ensure school readiness. Volunteers will work as child advocates with NRV CARES, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting children from abuse and strengthening families through education, advocacy and community partnerships. RSVP volunteers will provide tutoring in public schools leading to improvement in student academic

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engagement. RSVP volunteers will help local agencies and institutions build capacity by assisting with fundraising efforts at the annual Empty Bowls event, raising approximately \$7,000 for the Backpack Programs. Capacity building will also be achieved by supporting local blood drives with RSVP volunteers showing an in-kind value of around \$4,000. Other Community Priorities will be served through thrift shop support, adult literacy, transporting children through the NRCA's Child Health Improvement Partnership, working within local long-term care facilities, libraries, participating in the Humane Society, and working with Christmas programs providing assistance to those in need of holiday items including food and clothing.

The Volunteer Reporter Software Program will help support data collection and program compliance. Additionally, RSVP staff will work with stations to collect data, administer surveys and standard tools for measuring outcomes.

Recruitment and Development

Floyd and Giles County are picturesque areas with relatively low costs of living making them attractive retirement communities with relocating retirees often having higher education levels and incomes than native residents. New resident seniors bring different viewpoints to address community needs and, coupled with native seniors, contribute to the diversity of opinions and skills within the RSVP membership and leadership. NRCA RSVP builds and strengthens a corps of senior volunteers through recruitment and recognition, while offering meaningful experiences that address the CNCS focus areas and other community needs.

The RSVP Advisory Councils in Floyd and Giles Counties work with staff to identify and develop local opportunities for volunteer service. RSVP staff work with volunteer station supervisors to develop high quality volunteer job assignments, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and training opportunities. NRCA and Volunteer NRV (United Way) websites, NRCA RSVP Facebook page, and newspapers promote public awareness of the program, highlighting volunteer opportunities and accomplishments.

Staff and Advisory Councils promote volunteer diversity through recruitment presentations at retirement communities, civic, faith-based and veterans' groups. RSVP volunteers and station supervisors refer potential volunteers. Special activities such as pot luck recruitment lunches attract potential volunteers who hear about service opportunities.

New volunteers receive orientation and training to prepare them for service and improve their skills. RSVP staff member orient new volunteers on the goals and mission of NRCA, RSVP and CNCS. The

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local NRCA RSVP Volunteer Handbook outlining policies and procedures is provided to each volunteer. Volunteers receive copies of assignment job descriptions and receive training from station supervisors or their designees. To help senior volunteers bridge the digital divide, computer classes are offered through NRCA RSVP in collaboration with Virginia Tech. RSVP Advisory Councils receive training from NRCA and RSVP staff on Council duties, roles and responsibilities. Council members learn about community needs and planning through participation as focus groups in the New River Community Action Community Needs Assessment process.

RSVP staff promotes volunteer retention through ongoing communication efforts such as monthly newsletters, email notices, phone calls, birthday cards and notes. Monthly pot lucks afford volunteers opportunities to socialize and share service experiences. CNCS National Service Days bring volunteers together to work on projects that support their communities.

Volunteer recognition is ongoing through the RSVP Facebook page, newspaper articles highlighting special projects and volunteer accomplishments. Staff members nominate volunteers meeting service criteria for Presidential, Governor's and local awards. Annual volunteer appreciation events are held for all NRCA RSVP volunteers.

Program Management

The NRCA RSVP will be effective in the tracking, verification and reporting of volunteer hours through the use of "Volunteer Reporter Software" by Volunteer Software. Volunteer Software has been a leader in volunteer management software development since 1986, serving hospitals, Senior Corps programs, volunteer centers, schools, museums, non-profits and non-government organizations around the globe. NRCA RSVP written policies and procedures and Volunteer Software will be modified as necessary to ensure program compliance.

NRCA RSVP volunteers will not be placed within a workstation until there is a signed MOU for that workstation. NRCA RSVP staff will verify each new RSVP volunteer's age by reviewing their driver's license and signing off on that section in the new volunteer application. Only those who are 55 years of age or older will be accepted into the program. The following reporting tools will be used for tracking: hard copy volunteer timesheets, hard copy group sign-in sheets or activity logs, hard copy station timesheets or activity logs, email and telephone. NRCA RSVP staff will modify all volunteer timesheets, activity logs and sign-in sheets to provide the required documentation for CNCS reporting to include clients/individuals served to track output targets and ensure that the NRCA RSVP is monitoring all work plans. All hard copy documents signed by authorized persons and emails will include date, station, time served and applicable output targets. The handwritten volunteer time sheet

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will include date, station, time in and time out, and volunteer signature. Emails from authorized volunteers and station representatives with attached NRCA RSVP volunteer timesheets, group sign-in sheets, station timesheets, activity logs and output targets will be allowable. Emails will be printed and filed with the monthly collection of NRCA RSVP hours. Reporting by authorized volunteers and station representatives to NRCA RSVP staff via telephone will be allowed and recorded by staff. Volunteer and station records will be located in the NRCA RSVP Floyd and Giles offices with all records kept secure under the supervision of NRCA RSVP staff. Both hard copy and electronic records will be retained for three years after filing the final reports for the grant period. Records will be archived in the NRCA RSVP office or the NRCA designated storage facility.

Staff will follow the NRCA RSVP grant award's specific detailed work plans for volunteer activities and related data collection. The NRCA RSVP Director will work with the NRCA RSVP Coordinator and station supervisors to collect data using tools and timeframes noted in the grant award. Results and outcomes will be reported on the annual Performance Progress Report (PPR) in the CNCS eGrants reporting system. All surveys and results will be filed with the corresponding work plan in the three-ring binder for that grant award year. The binder will be maintained in the NRCA RSVP Director's office.

NRCA RSVP staff will ensure station compliance with RSVP program regulations through annual monitoring visits with stations to review and update volunteer job descriptions and to ensure volunteers are performing their assigned service activities within the new guidelines. MOUs, Safety Checklists and other documents as required will be updated and signed by volunteer workstations and NRCA RSVP staff. NRCA RSVP staff will review workstations to prevent or identify any RSVP prohibited activities as outlined in the CNCS regulations. NRCA RSVP policies and procedures will be followed to ensure completion of documents and follow up with stations failing to complete required forms. Stations out of compliance, performing prohibited activities or failing to complete and return documents will be contacted and exited from the program according to NRCA RSVP procedures and their MOUs will not be renewed until they are in compliance. Volunteers assigned to those stations will be contacted according to procedures. New workstations will be developed and trained by NRCA RSVP staff to ensure they are in compliance with CNCS regulations. Required MOUs, Safety Checklists and other documents required will be signed prior to volunteer placement. The stations will be educated on RSVP prohibited activities and MOUs will be updated to include this information to

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ensure compliance.

NRCA RSVP will minimize disruption to current volunteers and will graduate stations that no longer fall within the CNCS focus areas or capacity building. We will achieve this by no longer recruiting workstations that do not serve within CNCS focus areas. Additionally, existing workstations that do not fall within the CNCS focus areas will be reviewed annually for RSVP volunteer participation. Those stations that no longer utilize RSVP volunteers will not have their MOUs renewed. New RSVP volunteers will be encouraged to participate in CNCS focus area work stations. Potential or existing volunteers wishing to serve at a non-RSVP workstation will be referred by NRCA RSVP staff to those workstation supervisors as community volunteers.

NRCA RSVP currently utilizes two Advisory Councils, one in Floyd and one in Giles. A representative from each Advisory Council sits on the NRCA Board of Directors. Annually these two Councils meet jointly to assist in identifying local organizations and changing community needs within the CNCS focus areas and to conduct performance assessments, reflecting project accomplishments and impact on the communities and/or client population. A Low-Income Community Needs Assessment is coordinated yearly by NRCA with participation from the Advisory Councils. Additionally, NRCA RSVP Advisory Councils participate in the Community Stakeholder Survey. The project performance is reflected in the annual assessment survey completed by the NRCA RSVP Advisory Councils. Program accomplishments will be shared annually in the Performance Progress Report to the Advisory Councils, Board of Directors and Board Program Committee. NRCA RSVP staff meets with each potential workstation to discuss how it will positively impact the community and if it offers meaningful volunteer experiences matching NRCA RSVP and CNCS goals.

Project resources from the CNCS basic grant, contributions and other awarded grants are managed by the NRCA Finance Department according to agency Financial Policies and Procedures best practices. A copy of the semi-annual Federal Financial Report (FFR) will be given to the RSVP Director when completed for CNCS. Copies of the FFR and copies of all transactions for daily operation of the project will be kept on file in the RSVP offices. Monthly Summary of Expense and Income will be given to the Advisory Councils, Board of Directors Finance Committee, Executive Director, RSVP Director and reviewed at the monthly RSVP Management Team meeting. Annual budgets and any major budget revisions must be approved by the Board of Directors. In-kind will be tracked by the Finance Department and reviewed at the RSVP Management Team monthly meetings. Advisory Council

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members will be educated in the definition of and collection methods of in-kind at least annually. In-kind forms will be collected by volunteers at the time of donation of time, goods, services or space and forwarded to the NRCA financial staff or RSVP staff. The donor states on the form the item or service contributed, records the value, signs and dates the form.

NRCA receives support from local governments of the five jurisdictions served by NRCA. Some of these funds are allocated to the NRCA RSVP project annually by the Board of Directors. Volunteer van transportation is provided by Giles County and Floyd Calvary Baptist Church, with volunteers serving as drivers and NRCA RSVP providing gasoline for travel to and from designated volunteer work sites. NRCA has significant experience in the primary focus area of Healthy Futures through the operation of food pantries and the Floyd Backpack Program. NRCA RSVP volunteers have served extensively in the delivery of NRCA's food-related programs. NRCA RSVP volunteers also have a long history in respite service through local hospice organizations, and in providing transportation to homebound veterans and other individuals in the rural Floyd and Giles Counties.

Organizational Capability

A well-known proponent of self-sufficiency in the New River Valley since 1965, NRCA's mission is to promote and support the well-being and self-reliance of individuals, families and communities. The agency is a private, non-profit charitable corporation according to IRS code 501(c)(3) and part of a network of more than 1000 Community Action Agencies nationwide. Working with groups and citizens of all income levels, NRCA has provided leadership in the development of several local independent agencies such as the Free Clinic of the New River Valley, Women's Resource Center domestic violence shelter, New River Valley Habitat for Humanity, New River Family Shelter for homeless families with children, and the Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program (MCEAP). NRCA manages more than \$6 million in revenues annually, employs over 100 full and part-time staff and serves approximately 12,000 persons each year with the assistance of 2,000 volunteers.

Staff and volunteers located in the five jurisdictions the New River Valley -- Counties of Floyd, Giles, Pulaski, Montgomery and City of Radford -- work with agencies, faith-based organizations and groups of all income levels to develop programs appropriate for each local area. The agency's Board of Directors is composed of volunteers representing local governments, low-income communities and the private sector. It is a cross section of people from different age groups and backgrounds cemented together by a common desire to offer a "hand up" to their fellow neighbors in need. NRCA clients might be in financial need due to low wages, job loss, divorce, incarceration, disability or other crises.

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New River Community Action current programs (www.newrivercommunityaction.org) include: Head Start offering comprehensive, family-focused services to 3 and 4 year-old preschool-age children and their families; Children's Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP) assisting families with children up to age 7 to access health care, parent education and case management through home visiting; Emergency Assistance/Food Pantry providing food, clothing vouchers, and financial assistance for utilities, heating fuel, and rent for families experiencing financial crises; Floyd Back Pack Program providing weekend food for school-age children; Homeless & Housing Programs providing counseling, grants and loans for rent and mortgage, renter and home-buyer education; Virginia Community Action Re-Entry System (VA CARES) assisting ex-offenders in transitioning from prison or jail to society; Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) providing free tax preparation for increased income from tax credits; AmeriCorps offering opportunities for service to help local communities address their toughest challenges while members earn support for college or job training; and the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program offering meaningful volunteer opportunities for senior adults in Floyd and Giles Counties.

The governing Board of Directors coordinates with several NRCA Advisory Boards and Councils representing specific localities or programs. Local Advisory Boards focus on the particular needs of each of the 5 jurisdictions served by NRCA. CHIP, Head Start, VA CARES and RSVP each collaborate with program Advisory Councils. All advisory bodies have representation on the Board of Directors. These leadership volunteer groups are engaged in assessing community needs, developing and customizing programs to meet local needs, reviewing program accomplishments, challenges and quality improvement strategies. The Board of Directors functions through four working committees: Program Planning and Evaluation, Finance, Personnel, and Public Relations/Resource Development.

NRCA fiscal operations are directed by the agency's Financial Policies and Procedures Manual (FPPM), along with related federal and state financial directives. The FPPM is reviewed and revised annually by the Board's Finance Committee. Purchasing procedures, local and out-of-area travel, and in-kind donation policies are outlined in the FPPM. The NRCA Finance department utilizes the Financial Edge software developed by the Blackbaud Company. The agency is audited annually according to OMB A-133 requirements; audits are on file at the state CNCS office. During fiscal year 2012-13, NRCA managed \$6,052,689 in total revenues, including \$3,945,622 in federal funds. The Director of Human Resources is responsible for personnel management, ensuring compliance

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with federal and state personnel regulations. NRCA maintains an employment law contract with Woods/Rogers, Attorneys at Law. Job descriptions are periodically reviewed and updated by the Board of Directors and supervisors evaluate each staff member annually according to Board-approved procedures.

NRCA owns or rents 15 facilities throughout the agency's 1,000 square mile service area. The agency Facilities and Transportation Department manages these sites along with NRCA's fleet of autos and Head Start buses. Computers and software are purchased and maintained by the agency's IT Director.

NRCA's current RSVP is supported by the RSVP Management Team consisting of the agency's Executive Director, full-time RSVP Director, Director of Finance and Accountant. This team meets monthly to review revenues and expenses, in-kind, program compliance and progress of work plans. Terry Smusz, Executive Director, holds a Bachelor of Science in Sociology and a Master's degree in Criminology. She has more than 30 years experience in non-profit management and has served as NRCA's Executive Director since 1988. Tammy Pennington, NRCA Finance Director, holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree and has 23 years related experience. Michelle Cox, Accountant, has a Bachelor degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management and 15 years of bookkeeping and accounting experience. Both have been employed with NRCA since 2000. Valerie Mills, RSVP Director, has an Associate's degree in Accounting and Office Administration and is completing a Bachelor of Science in Human Resource Management. Ms. Mills has businesses management experience as a liaison between customers, staff and government contacts, and accounting analysis. She has local volunteer fund raising experience and has worked as the NRCA RSVP Program Support Technician assisting with volunteer recordkeeping and recognition events. Ms. Mills was initially hired as the NRCA RSVP Coordinator in June 2013 and was recently promoted to Director. Ms. Milles duties include overall NRCA RSVP management and compliance, reporting to the Board of Directors and CNCS. Additionally, Ms. Mills is responsible for volunteer and station recruitment, assignment of volunteers, recognition, staff support to the RSVP Floyd Advisory Council, ensuring program compliance and monitoring work plans in Floyd County. Her office is located in Floyd County.

Ms. Mills supervises the RSVP part-time (25 hours per week) Coordinator, Cynthia Laws, hired on September 3, 2013. Ms. Law holds a certification in Long-term Care Management. She has experience as the Activity Director at Riverview Nursing Home where she recruited and supervised volunteers and planned daily activities. She also has experience managing school and library

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volunteers. Ms. Law's duties focus on program operations in Giles County, including volunteer and station recruitment, assignment of volunteers, recognition, staff support to the RSVP Giles Advisory Council, ensuring program compliance and monitoring work plans. Her office is located in Giles County. Ms. Mills and Ms. Laws meet at least monthly for staff support and supervision and to coordinate total program management and compliance.

Other

This section is not needed for this application.

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

This section is not required for this application,