

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

The Crater District Area Agency on Aging (CDAAA) is a governmental entity established in 1975 under the Older Americans Act and currently serves as the sponsor of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) Southside in Virginia Planning District 19. The mission of the agency is to function as an advocate for seniors 55 years of age and older. RSVP fits into the overall mission of the agency.

An estimated two hundred and thirty-five (235) RSVP volunteers will serve in the Crater District.

Some of their activities will include:

- \* Meal delivery and food distribution through Meals on Wheels programs and food pantries in the area;
- \* Assistance to military families through the Kenner Army Health Clinic and Pharmacy and through an on-base thrift store;
- \* Health care education at congregate meal sites, including Senior Centers throughout the district;
- \* Assistance with housing through organizations that build, modify or repair homes for qualified individuals;
- \* Preparation Training for Disaster Relief and mitigation through the American Red Cross stations in the district; and
- \* Ecologically friendly improvement of trails and waterways connected to the Appomattox River Heritage Trail along the lower Appomattox River.

The primary focus area of the project is Healthy Futures, due to the recognized need for improved health as reported in studies and surveys of the area.

At the end of the three-year grant, it is anticipated that 2,819 individuals will report a sense of increased food security because of the impact of RSVP volunteers and the programs in which they serve.

The CNCS investment of \$42,068 will be supplemented by \$29,149 of non-federal funds secured for the purpose of operating the program effectively and efficiently.

## Strengthening Communities

The Crater District Area Agency on Aging serves Virginia Planning District 19 which includes the cities

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of Colonial Heights, Emporia, Hopewell and Petersburg, as well as the counties of Dinwiddie, Greensville, Prince George, Surry, Sussex and southern Chesterfield. The population in the service area is 168,346 (U.S. Census, CLARITAS). Every area served has an unemployment rate higher than the state average of 5.6%, with Petersburg having the third highest in the state at 11.8% (U.S. Census, CLARITAS). The region ranks low in health evaluations, with Petersburg ranking 131st out of 131 counties reported in the state for mortality, morbidity and overall health outcomes (Indicators of Community Strengths, Greater Richmond and Petersburg United Way, 2012).

Food security remains an issue due to economic conditions in the district. An average of 56% of children in the district qualify for free or reduced lunches, with Petersburg being the highest in the state at 80%, compared to the state average closer to 30%. The number participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has increased by up to 12% over the last six years, Petersburg now standing at 34% (Indicators of Community Strengths, Greater Richmond and Petersburg Region, United Way, 2012).

In the CDAAA service area, 30% of seniors 65 and older live alone, with approximately one-third of those living in poverty (Indicators of Community Strengths, Greater Richmond and Petersburg Region, United Way, 2012).

While economic conditions impact nutritional quality and food security, nutrition impacts broader concerns. The need is addressed by RSVP volunteers who deliver meals to the less mobile seniors to encourage independent living. Food pantries offer a solution to the need of nutritional basics by distributing food to those meeting host site requirements. The reported increase in the feelings of food security, based on survey results, will reflect the impact of the RSVP volunteer efforts to address the need. In addition the number of individuals receiving delivered meals will enhance the life of the seniors, increasing nutrition and socialization for them.

The number of RSVP volunteers and the hours they serve are captured on timesheets approved by host sites and submitted monthly to the RSVP office. In like manner, the timesheets record the number of individuals served by the RSVP volunteer during the monthly time frame.

Reports received in the RSVP office are tabulated and processed by the RSVP Coordinator and

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quarterly reports are submitted to the CDAAA Board of Directors for evaluation. In addition, the RSVP Coordinator and/or the RSVP Project Director, visit each site at least twice each year to ensure compliance with reporting requirements and the quality of experience of the RSVP volunteer.

Within the CDAAA service area is Fort Lee, a United States Army installation with a resident population of around 34,000. Due to the Base Realignment Closure mandate of 2005, Ft. Lee has experienced explosive growth which includes a massive \$1.2 billion remodernization mission. The residents utilize the services of the Kenner Army Health Clinic and Pharmacy. The clinic and adjacent pharmacy utilize RSVP volunteers to serve Ft. Lee residents with prescription assistance, internal medical transfer, informational distribution and companionship.

An on-base thrift store is operated by the Ft. Lee Spouses Club, giving military families the opportunity to purchase clothing, supplies, furniture, etc. at reduced prices. RSVP volunteers serve as clerks in the facility to assist the family members as they shop. The base offers a growing potential for RSVP service as they expand their openness to volunteerism.

### **Recruitment and Development**

The Crater District is fortunate to have a good number of organizations that engage the community in positive ways and offer opportunities for significant and meaningful volunteerism. RSVP seeks to be a personnel resource clearinghouse, connecting volunteers with sites committed to positively impacting the community. In order to develop this clearinghouse, RSVP looks to:

- \* Find existing organizations which are functioning effectively and are open to the use of volunteers to enhance their programs and recruit them to serve as RSVP host stations;
- \* Get in front of seniors at civic organizations, senior fairs, churches of all kinds, senior housing facilities and other public forums to recruit seniors for service in the community;
- \* Advertise at restaurants and other locations frequented by seniors in the area;
- \* Use Ft. Lee newsletter to promote volunteerism through the RSVP program in and off base;
- \* Use senior centers to recruit the less mobile for special involvement through RSVP.

RSVP will offer a general training regarding RSVP purposes, handbook of policies and procedures, and expectations. On-site training will be provided by the host station. Additional training will be offered as requested or as determined necessary.

RSVP volunteers deserve recognition for their efforts. RSVP will host an Annual Recognition

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Celebration where awards and certificates will be presented, including the President's Award where appropriate. In addition, there will be a holiday celebration toward the end of the calendar year for the expressed purpose of socialization. One additional celebration gathering will occur during the calendar year to express appreciation for the RSVP service. At this gathering there will be a survey taken to ascertain the satisfaction level of volunteers, looking at their views on the RSVP sites where they serve. These surveys will be evaluated by RSVP office personnel to make adjustments or modifications to the program to ensure a high-quality, meaningful volunteer experience.

### **Program Management**

RSVP will offer an Annual Training for site representatives to review expectations and any changes that may occur that alters policy and procedure. At least visits per year to each site will be to verify compliance with RSVP regulations and to ensure a safe and productive environment for volunteers. Those visits will be made by the RSVP Coordinator and/or the RSVP Director. Quarterly calls to sites will be made monitor satisfaction level with volunteers and to address issues if they arise. The RSVP Coordinator will lead in making the calls; the RSVP Director will lead in any intervention necessary to improve the satisfaction levels of both site and volunteer.

RSVP Southside will have graduated stations, due partly to the changes in requirements, but also in changes made at various sites themselves. One group is disbanding after several decades of service. Those volunteers will be offered other opportunities in approved RSVP sites in the area. One food pantry site is closing; that volunteer will be given the names of other similar programs in close proximity. Some health care centers/nursing homes will necessarily be graduated. The volunteers will be offered opportunities elsewhere or will remain in place outside the parameters of RSVP. While the graduation is reality, the disruption caused by the realignment is minimal; much of the change would have occurred even without the realignment.

RSVP Southside has been involved in meal delivery, food distribution and health-related education during the current grant. In meal delivery, one Meals on Wheels site received the assistance of two volunteers. Invitations already exist to expand into two additional sites with a proposed increase of volunteers. Health care education at congregate meal sites has involved ten volunteers at four sites, donating 764 hours of service. In food distribution, 69 volunteers in eight sites have contributed 4,951 hours in one year of service. Still it remains an area of dramatic need and opportunity.

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Care is taken to ensure the RSVP requirements are met by stations and by volunteers. Volunteer applications are scrutinized by the RSVP Coordinator for age appropriateness and detailed information regarding requirements for RSVP insurance data. The sites must sign a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines expectations and requirements by RSVP regarding the sites. This includes an understanding of the purpose of the program, the timeliness of reporting, the prohibited activities and the openness of communication. All written material is reviewed annually with any concerns being raised during a site visit or upon request.

The RSVP Advisory Council represents the geographic areas served by the CAAA; they advise and assist the staff in the areas of planning, recruiting, recognitions and fundraising. The RSVP Coordinator represents the staff in fundraising efforts.

### **Organizational Capability**

The CDAAA has programs in Nutrition, Weatherization, Social Work, Legal Concerns and Support, Title 5, and hosts Meals on Wheels with congregate meals, in addition to the Senior Corps entities of Foster Grandparents Program and RSVP. Many of these programs secure federal grants that are managed by CDAAA. The CDAAA Interim Director oversees the management of the RSVP Southside and the other programs of the CDAAA. She has been with CDAAA of over three decades and is familiar with grant management and program development. The Interim Director of Finance handles the FFR and budget controls, utilizing a strict system of requisition for procurement and accounting procedures. He has been involved with government grants extensively during his two years with CDAAA and has experience with SAMs. The RSVP Project Director has over four decades of experience in the leadership of non-profit organizations, while the RSVP Coordinator comes from a legal background. The skills and experiences merge into a workable force to manage RSVP operations. The CDAAA Board of Directors reviews activities and operations. CDAAA is proud of the reports given each year by an outside auditing firm that approves the financial reporting of the organization, including RSVP.

### **Other**

N/A

### **PNS Amendment (if applicable)**

N/A