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Executive Summary

An estimated 300RSVP volunteers will serve. Some of the activities will include food distribution and delivery, support of veterans in rural areas, financial literacy and housing services. The primary focus of this project is Healthy Futures. At the end of the three year grant, seniors will feel more connected with their community because they have provided needed and appreciated services in their neighborhoods and organizations and agencies will be able to improve the quality of the services they provide because of well training and highly and motivated senior volunteers. . The CNCS federal investment of \$98,198 will be supplemented with \$15,185 anticipated non-federal match.

Strengthening Communities

PA -2X is comprised of Huntingdon and Blair Counties in Central Pennsylvania. This area is predominantly rural with the exception of the City of Altoona (46,321) and surrounding area in Blair County. Blair County has a population of 127,000 and Huntingdon's is 45,900. The largest population center in Huntingdon County is Huntingdon Borough (7066). In Blair County, 30.9% of the population is age 55 and older and in Huntingdon County 29.15 of the population is over 55 (PA State Data Center, County Data Book 2013).

While both counties share a rural nature, they have distinctive differences. Huntingdon County generally has one of the highest unemployment rates in the state; 9.2% in July of 2013 (PA: 7.8%) and Blair County is generally lower: 6.9% for July of 2013. Huntingdon County also has a much higher population of African Americans. Smithfield Township hosts 99% of the minority population in two state correction institutions.

According to the 2009 needs assessment conducted by Blair County United Way, a challenge for senior citizens in Blair County is community isolation and some seniors are unmotivated to leave their homes. The study also found a lower than expected volunteer rate in the county neighborhoods, 26%. Coupled with the trend toward an older population, indicates that opportunities for volunteerism and assistance in matching the RSVP volunteer to a sponsor that will provide a high quality experience will address a need for community engagement among seniors in the region.

Center for Community Action has contacted previous RSVP Sponsors in Huntingdon and Blair Counties and discovered that many organizations were interested in renewing their support of the RSVP Program and would participate in the RSVP Advisory Board. These organizations include Blair

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Senior Services, United Way of Huntingdon County and United Way of Blair County, J. C. Blair Hospital, James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center and the Hollidaysburg Veteran's Home.

The Primary Focus Area, Healthy Futures, has been determined through conversations with previous volunteer sponsor stations, local non-profits and the United Ways. Of major concern to the area is food security. Currently both counties are seeing an increase in residents seeking assistance from the local food pantries. At least one food pantry was completely out of food in Huntingdon County in the last quarter. Federal and state dollars have decreased significantly in the past years requiring local groups to spend more time soliciting donations.

Another major concern is the aging population and the ability to age in place. Vulnerable elderly need assistance in maintaining quality of life in their existing residents, with high costs of a assisted living facilities, aging in place reduce the strain on the community to provide alternative living situations. CCA uses the Outcome Results System software, a data collection and reporting system that can be customized for individual program needs. The Program Director will use the ORS System to track volunteer hours and services.

Surveys will be developed using guidelines from the RSVP Policy Manual as well as other similar program. These will be developed by the Program Director upon receipt of grant and with the cooperation of the Advisory Council and Volunteer Stations to meet the multiple reporting and confidentiality needs of differing organizations.

CCA, as a Community Action Agency, participates in the National Performance Measures that demonstrate the effectiveness of the Community Services Block Grant funding. CCA submits a Community Outcomes and Performance (COPOS) report semiannually and submits goals and objectives that address community need in each contract year. CCA Board of Directors and all staff have completed Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) training that exemplifies the HHS standards for measuring performance outcomes using the Carter-Maxwell Management systems.

The Volunteer Activity Sheets will be used to collect data. They will be submitted on line, by fax or mailed if necessary.

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The James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center and the Hollidaysburg Veteran's Home are both located in Blair County. Both of these organizations have volunteer coordinators on staff. Veterans will be served through RSVP volunteers with the activities being developed through a partnership with the agencies serving veterans. CCA has a partnership agreement with Veteran's Leadership Program of Western PA to provide referrals and case management through the Supportive Services for Veteran's Families. Contacts from these programs will be used to identify need and recruit volunteers.

Recruitment and Development

Center for Community Action will hire a full time Program Director to implement the RSVP Program. The Program Director will be responsible for volunteer and volunteer station recruitment and development. Recruitment, retention and recognition are all interrelated. If volunteers experiences are high quality and meaningful, recognitions is often and sincere, and volunteers have the skills and ability to be successful at their assignments; retention should follow. The Program director will work closely with the Advisory Council to identify and coordinate activities based on feedback from volunteers and volunteer stations including exit interviews with all willing volunteers to identify any program problems and successes for continual quality improvement. The Program Director will also work with his/her supervisor, the CCA Grant Manager to maintain program guidelines and all required agency policy and procedures.

Activities that will be instituted to provide motivation and feedback to volunteers and volunteer stations will include development and maintenance of an RSVP web site and a face book or similar page. Volunteers will be encouraged to share their experiences on this medium.

Traditional media will also be used. Six times a year, a large advertisement will be placed in the Altoona Mirror Senior Edition and the Huntingdon Daily News that will highlight the activities and successes of the RSVP Program. A newsletter will be published electronically and distributed to community based organizations to let prospective volunteer stations know of the services available. It will also be available on the RSVP website. News releases will be done periodically to highlight special events and important successes.

A luncheon will be provided for Volunteer Coordinators quarterly as a reward and also to provide a forum for coordinators to share best practices and increase their understanding of the importance of senior activity in the lives of seniors and their community.

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An annual awards banquet for RSVP Volunteers will be given to show support and appreciation. The Program Director will work with the Advisory Board and Volunteer Stations to solicit sponsors and nominate outstanding volunteers.

The Program Director will also be involved in local coalitions and consortiums that will lead to volunteer opportunities such as the Local Housing Options Teams, the human services councils, and other local groups. This network will also help identify community needs, outreach opportunities, agencies and organizations that need help in capacity building and other opportunities to strengthen the community through allowed RSVP activities.

Both Blair and Huntingdon County have a homogenous population. The region is predominantly white (97.3% in Blair County and 94% in Huntingdon). Approximately 30% of the populations of Blair and Huntingdon Counties are over age 55. CCA will work with agencies that provide services for seniors such as Blair Senior Services, Area Agency on Aging, senior housing complexes to recruit volunteers. Veterans will be recruited The James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center and the Hollidaysburg Veteran's Home are both located in Blair County as well as local Veterans of Foreign Wars service organizations.

Infrastructure to retain and recognize volunteers will be the use of face book and the website to provide immediate recognition for benchmarks such as years of service (We will recognize past program years if we have access to that information) hours of service, birthdays etc. The RSVP Project Director as well as the Volunteer Station Coordinators will provide feedback through email, notes and phone calls to encourage and show appreciation to new volunteers, monthly to start and then at longer intervals. Volunteer Coordinators at the stations will be given instruction on how to encourage volunteers.

RSVP will ask for nominations for volunteers to be featured each month in the newsletter, web site or other venue as appropriate. Recognition may include mile stones such as length of service, reaching a benchmark number of Hours etc. The advisory board will work with the project director to establish recognition guidelines.

Availability of reimbursement for lunches and travel: Particularly for low income seniors who want to

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volunteer but demonstrate barriers because of transportation costs (There is limited public transportation in Blair County and none in Huntingdon County.

There will be an annual banquet for RSVP volunteers as well as a luncheon for Volunteer coordinators to provide face to face and group appreciation.

Training of volunteers will begin with an orientation to the RSVP Program and program guidelines, volunteer job descriptions and benefits of being a volunteer. Orientation will also address the Primary Focus Area, Healthy Futures, how it is defined by RSVP, understand the importance of measuring outcomes and how RSVP will measure and report outcomes and other data.

Volunteer stations will identify required trainings and clearances in their MOUs. Specialized training will be provided to the volunteers by the station. All RSVP Volunteers will attend an orientation. The program Director will identify through volunteers, sponsors and the advisory council what types of trainings would be beneficial. Training opportunities will be provided to volunteers through qualified agencies and staff. As the RSVP sponsor, CCA will provide opportunities for volunteers such as First Aid, Bridges Out of Poverty, Financial Literacy, Prepared Renters Training and others that are offered to our staff and can help volunteers understand the population(s) they are working with.

CCA will work with volunteer stations to provide specific trainings for their organization by letting RSVP Volunteers attend staff trainings or identify any online training that may assist volunteers. Required trainings for Volunteers may use the CCA facilities to access these trainings. Volunteers that attend trainings will be recognized at the Annual RSVP Awards Banquet.

Program Management

The Project Director will work with volunteer stations to create a job description for the services needed. The Volunteer station will identify a person to act as volunteer coordinator before a volunteer is placed. At this time, the Project Director will determine that the need and scope of activity match the RSVP Program goals. Once a volunteer has been matched with the need of the volunteer station, the Program Director will monitor activity in two ways. The volunteer coordinator will provide a "Volunteer Activity Sheet" to describe any activity, problems and successes. This will be signed by the volunteer to verify concurrence. The Program Director will also visit sites on occasion to speak with the volunteers and coordinators to see that reports accurately reflect activity. Volunteer Coordinators will be rewarded through recognition luncheon to encourage compliance. The forms and submissions

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will be available on line and submitted electronically to ease any reporting burden.

Volunteer's stations will be monitored using the Volunteer Activity Sheet. Sites will be visited while volunteers are on duty as well. Job Descriptions and volunteers activities will be reviewed at least quarterly with the Volunteer Station Coordinator and the authorizing agent at the volunteer station (Executive Director, Program Coordinator, etc.) to ensure program integrity is being maintained.

There is currently no RSVP sponsor in PA-2X.CCA will identify past volunteer stations that meet the National Performance Standards to begin recruitment and outreach. If past volunteer stations that do not meet performance standard requirements are interested in becoming a volunteer station; the Project Director will work with them to identify ways that they can fit the performance model or refer them to other agencies that may assist them in recruiting volunteers such as Blair Senior Services, United Way and Area Agency on Aging and local service organizations.

The Primary Focus Area Identified is Healthy Futures. To address food security, CCA currently operates three programs. The Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program, The Emergency Food and Shelter Program, and the State Food Purchase Program. CCA works with 4 local food banks, the United Way and the Salvation Army to assist in the maintenance and delivery of food to decrease food insecurity. In the first six month of 2013, CCA administered programs assisted over 3000 individuals in food programs. Program administration includes monitoring, invoicing and program reporting for these programs.

Aging in Place is addressed on multiple levels. CCA has administered the Pennsylvania Housing Assistance Program that enables individual to stay in their homes y providing home modifications to assist the disabled and elderly. CCA also provides home rehabilitation and repair to stabilize housing by mediating health and safety concerns for low income families -- these households are often elderly. CCA also provides Representative Payee services through the Social Security Administration to assist vulnerable populations in maintain self sufficiency. Another program administered by CCA is the Medical Assistance Transportation Program which coordinates transportation services for eligible individuals to remove transportation as a barrier to accessing health care.

An RSVP Advisory council will be formed with a cross section of volunteer stations, agencies

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representing the elderly and/or retired and community groups working in the Primary Focus Area. The Advisory group will also have representation from both counties. The Advisory council will review Volunteer Activity Sheets; assist with volunteer recruitment and volunteer station recruitment.

The Project Director will maintain MOU's with the Volunteer Job Description before Volunteers are placed. The CCA Grant Manager will review MOU's and they will be signed by the CCA Executive Director as well as an official with signing authority from the volunteer Station. MOU's will be reviewed at a minimum annually and more often if job descriptions are changed. The MOU will include the designated Volunteer Coordinator, include the job descriptions, verify volunteer insurance and allow for Volunteer Station Coordinator to provide information needed to maintain program integrity.

The Program Director will perform a background checks on all volunteers. The Volunteer Station will perform additional clearances if necessary. The Volunteer will complete a RSVP Application that will include qualifications, types of tasks they are interested in performing, available hours and any travel or other restrictions. The prospective volunteer will show official photo ID and a file will be maintained on each volunteer.

Organizational Capability

Center for Community Action serves five counties in south central PA: Blair, Huntingdon, Bedford, Fulton, Franklin and Somerset with 29 full time employees and 2 part time employees. We currently maintain offices in Bedford, Huntingdon, Fulton and Somerset County. The offices are set up with receptionists, complete computer capabilities, printing, scanning, and copying, phone and internet capabilities. All offices are handicap accessible with conference rooms available for meetings. If awarded the RSVP grant, we have identified two possible office locations in Blair County, both in Altoona that would house the RSVP Director 3 days a week with the remaining days being sent in Huntingdon County.

The CCA finance department has three full time employees. CCA's Board of Directors is structured with 15 directors representing elected officials, low income populations and community members from our primary service areas. CCA uses the Outcome Results System (ORS) database management system for client tracking and service reports.

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RSVP will be administered according to all program requirements according to agency policy and procedures. A Program Director will be hired and under the supervision of the Grant Manager. The Grant Manger is supervised by the Executive Director and reports monthly to the Board of Directors. All invoicing and expenditures is done through the fiscal department to insure compliance with GAAP and will be approved by the ED. In addition to our current website; centerforcommunityaction.org, CAC will set up a dedicated website for RSVP.

CCA's mission is to coordinate, partner, and provide services and resources to promote self-sufficiency in our service area. The vision for CCA is to serve as a catalyst for economic, educational, social, and workforce development. Through collaboration and cooperation within the communities we serve, CCA provides diverse resources that promote self-sufficiency and community prosperity. By RSVP program would provide CCA an opportunity to make meaningful connections and strengthen the communities through service, creating a better quality of life for all residents.

The RSVP program will be administered by the RSVP Program Director (PD), a copy of the job description and qualifications has been sent. The PD will be responsible for implementing all aspects of the program under the supervision of the Grant Manager. The Grant Manager, will complete and submit required reports to Corporation for National and Community Services (CNCS). The Grant Manager will also report monthly to the CCA Board of Directors with program updates. The CCA Executive Director is responsible for any major agency decisions that will also affect RSVP in relation to other programs administered by CCA. CCA's fiscal department will process all invoices and expenditures according to applicable OMB circulars. Separation of duties is outlined in the CCA Fiscal Policies and a financial report is submitted to the Executive Director and Board of Directors each month.

The fiscal management system Center for Community Action is outlined in our Fiscal Procedures Manual and is available on request. These procedures and policies allow us to provide efficient services following the GAAP standards and procedures. CCA uses the Blackbaud Financial Edge Accounting software. This system is hosted off site with internet connectivity so the agency has continual and safe access and back up of all financial data inputs and reports regardless of any local technical or physical emergencies. CCA tracks all of our grants as separate projects and specific budgets and line items allowing for complete accountability of program funds with immediate and up to date access of

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financial information. CCA uses an accrual method of accounting. CCA agrees to follow the "uniform" fiscal and administrative requirements for grants and cooperative agreements for state and local governments or the common rule implementing OMB Circular A-110 as applicable to USDA programs.

The Accounting Department's staff has experience with various types and sizes of both government grants and contractual agreements. Our Fiscal Manager has a B.S in Accounting and our Accounting Clerks have combined experience of over 30 years.

Internal Fiscal Monitoring occurs through coordination with the program directors and the Fiscal Manager. The Grant Manager will monitor all expenditures in the RSVP Program against planned goals and program guidelines to eliminate disallowable costs and provide the most efficient use of funds over the course of the contract. Budget reports are reviewed throughout the month to ensure no disallowed costs or over-expenditures and to measure performance. Payments are approved by the Board of Directors. The agency practices segregation of duties in its cash disbursements, cash receipts and receiving procedures to ensure compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. The agency's internal monitoring procedures are reviewed each year with the independent auditors for compliance. CCA will pay back any disallowed costs as identified by state or federal monitors or auditors using unrestricted funds. CCA also has a line of credit available for discretionary use.

CCA currently administers 23 grants, the largest being the Child Care Information Services (\$1,436,000/FY 2013/2014) from the Dept. of Health and Human Services through the PA department of Public Welfare. CCA also administers grants originating from the Department of Energy, US Department of Agriculture, and US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Most grants are pass-through from Department of Community and Economic Development, and PA Dept. of Public Welfare. Some grants pass through local municipality and county governments. CCA is the community action agency for Huntingdon, Bedford and Fulton counties and as such receives the Community Services Block Grant. This grant uses the National Performance Indicator measures and the Results Oriented Management and Accountability process for goals, objectives and outcome monitoring.

Other

There are no other notice requirements

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PNS Amendment (if applicable)

Not Applicable