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Executive Summary

Colby Community College, Colby, Kansas is the sponsor for the Northwest Kansas Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. (RSVP). Colby Community College holds the sponsorship of the RSVP program in highest regard. The RSVP program and activities are not only of vital importance to our communities served and the recipients of our numerous projects, but also of eminent value to our volunteers themselves. The mission of the Northwest Kansas RSVP is to connect individuals 55 and older, their skills and talents with community needs through volunteer service.

Northwest Kansas RSVP is a multi-county program with an estimated 200 unduplicated volunteers that have provided continuous volunteer service to the rural citizens of Phillips, Thomas, Logan and Sheridan counties located in far Northwest Kansas since 1973, currently with a total multi-county population of 18, 854. The program was designed for the dual purpose of engaging persons 55 and older in volunteer service to meet critical community needs; and to provide a high quality experience that will enrich the lives of volunteers.

RSVP volunteers are dedicated to strengthening their program, their communities and themselves through their involvement in a program that has proven its significance through its reputation. RSVP volunteers contribute to a multitude of needs with the primary focus on Healthy Futures. RSVP volunteers ensure Healthy Futures to the frail elderly, and/or disabled, veterans and underprivileged of the communities by providing nutritional meals, companionship and access to healthy food. A positive impact is anticipated at the end of year 3, as the Aging in Place service activities will enable frail elderly, and/or disabled, veterans to maintain their independence through an increase in improved nutritional quality, increased food security alleviating long term hunger and the benefit of social interaction.

The Corporation for National and Community Service federal investment of \$42,334 will be supplemented by \$43,312 local funds.

Strengthening Communities

Community Need: The Communities served by the Northwest Kansas RSVP are very remote, small rural communities located in the Northwest corner of Kansas with agriculture being the largest industry. The program office is located in Colby, Kansas. According to the 2010 US Census, Thomas

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County includes five communities with a population of 7,900, including 564 veterans. Phillips County's total population is 5,642 with five communities, including 137 veterans. Logan County includes five communities with a population of 2,756, including 217 veterans. Sheridan County's two communities total 2,556, including 272 veterans. The unemployment rate is currently high at 8.4%, 17% are disabled and the average family income is \$45,735. There is not a lot of racial diversity in our small communities with 97% of the population being Caucasian. Although we are small agricultural communities, there is a lot of diversity among our volunteers according to their educational and occupational backgrounds, which is based on the age of the volunteers. Many of our older volunteers did not have the opportunity to complete their high school education, let alone college education like our younger group of volunteers have had. Colby (in Thomas County) with its location adjacent to Interstate 70, is 220 miles east of Denver, Colorado and 375 miles west of Kansas City, Kansas and is referred to as the "Oasis on the Plains". Colby is the hub of activity for many of the smaller communities for medical care, including specialists from the larger cities, and educational and cultural events. According to current Kansas State Research and Extension information, the greying of America is evident in Northwest Kansas, where the most recent census shows more than 20.35% of the adult population is over age 65. Information is also documented regarding the state's senior citizens by the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services, the state's trusted agency for information regarding the elderly and disabled. Kansas has 105 counties that are served by 11 Area Agencies divisions. The counties served by this grant application are served by the Northwest Kansas Area Agency on Aging, which serves 18 counties in Northwest Kansas. Area Agencies serving rural communities work hard to ensure needs of the older adults residing in these rural areas will be taken into consideration and action taken to remedy the unmet needs. In 2011, 67.8% of the Kansas population age 65 and older owned their homes, which is slightly above the national average. According to the US Census, 46.8% of Kansans age 65 and older lived alone in 2011.

Service Activities: According to the Kansas State Plan on Aging 2014-2017, an important service goal is to enable more seniors to remain in their homes by promoting community services and supports, helping them to achieve healthier, more active lives. RSVP, therefore will address Healthy Futures, Aging in Place/Obesity and Food as their Primary Focus Area to enable RSVP volunteers to assist in meeting the needs of rural senior citizens, including Veterans and military family in our service area. The Kansas State Plan also addresses needs that the local Area Agencies have determined to be unmet needs for the elderly in their counties. One of the prominent themes for unmet needs for this state

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plan includes access to affordable healthy foods, help with meal preparation/delivery and in home care assistance. The service activities carried out by the volunteers include assistance to the elderly and disabled to maintain and improve independence through meal delivery, telephone calls and friendly visits. Meal delivery will enhance senior nutrition and companionship activities will be of benefit to homebound seniors and disabled individuals, including Veterans and military family members. Volunteers will work with food distributions that may include senior citizens and Veterans.

Plan and infrastructure to support data collection: The RSVP plan to manage RSVP volunteers and their stations involves input from staff of the respective volunteer stations, the RSVP Advisory Council and RSVP Staff. Training/educational information will be provided to the volunteers and stations who are placed/involved in the Healthy Future work plans. Stations and volunteers will submit the appropriate timesheets and tracking forms. The Northwest Kansas Area Agency will provide the Homestead Nutrition Home Delivered Meal report for the counties/stations involved and timesheets will include Companionship documentation to ensure accurate reporting. Timesheets will be submitted and recorded on a monthly basis in the Volunteer Reporter Software for accurate tracking. The Anticipated Outcome will be determined by surveys to clients, mailed or delivered at the end of the program year.

National Performance Outcomes: RSVP volunteers in the Primary Focus Area of Healthy Futures will work through respective volunteer stations to aid the elderly and disabled to enable them to maintain and improve independence in their own homes by assisting home-delivered meals programs. The National Performance Measure H9, number of homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities who report having increased social ties, will be measured. Surveys will be conducted once a year to ensure that at least 50% of the clients involved in these service activities report positively to the survey. Volunteers will work through respective stations to complete National Performance Measure, H12, number of individuals that reported increased food security of themselves and their children (household food security) as a result of CNCS-supported services. Surveys will be conducted once a year to ensure that at least 35% of the clients report increased food security. The process of timesheets submittals, client tracking and client surveys will clearly provide the means for gathering the data to report on this performance measure.

Activity in Service to Veterans and/or Military Families: Service to Veterans and Military Families will

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be reflected in the Primary Focus Area, Healthy Futures and also in the Capacity Building Work Plans.

RSVP will work with local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and American Legions to offer volunteer opportunities to serve Veterans and Military family members. RSVP has opportunities to volunteer with other veterans or in the community at large working with stations in the Primary Focus Area, Healthy Futures and Capacity Building. RSVP volunteers will have significant service activities that will impact the lives of Veterans through events held at VFW's and Legions, including holiday events for the children of the military, monthly meals, and being part of remembrances held nationwide for our active military and Veterans with Veteran's Day poppy sales, parades and community events and Memorial Day celebrations. Volunteers who are Veterans will share their military stories at local museums and schools during the Veteran's Day activities. Although, we do not have a specific Veterans work plan, we have many volunteers involved in this focus area that are Veterans themselves serving other Veterans. The program will devise a plan to better identify the Veterans that are currently volunteers, as well as Veterans and Military Family members that may be potential volunteers or may be in need of the service. This will help integrate the Veterans and their families into the community.

Recruitment and Development

Plan for High Quality Volunteer Assignments:

RSVP offers a variety of opportunities for volunteers to serve the community. RSVP strives to form partnerships in the community with stations that focus on community need. Input from staff of volunteer stations and RSVP staff will be used to create volunteer assignments that are the best fit for each of the volunteers. The Volunteer Registration Form is used to gather information about the volunteer, such as talents and hobbies, education and training, occupational experience and limitations that they may have. The registration form also asks for the type of volunteer service that the volunteer desires. RSVP strives for its volunteers to have meaningful volunteer experiences and the program seeks volunteer opportunities that will allow volunteers to use their past experiences and ability gained from their occupations and from their years of living. The program is aware that volunteers often volunteer to find meaningful opportunities, are motivated by the call to service or just enjoy the way they are treated. The program helps volunteers to have a truly rewarding, high quality experience by connecting them with an opportunity to fit their schedule and make the best use of the talents they have to share. Volunteers with work experience, management skills or leadership abilities are connected with volunteer opportunities that utilize their abilities, often increasing their volunteer responsibility. Volunteers are surveyed to see if the volunteer opportunities available to them are

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meeting their needs and expectations. Volunteers are made aware of new volunteer opportunities that match the skills and interests that they mentioned on their registration form or on volunteer updates. Volunteers report on surveys that RSVP is their "key to the outside world" and that their quality of life is enhanced through the new skills and opportunities that RSVP offers them, as well as the new friendships they enjoy.

Volunteer Training: As stated in the volunteer station Memorandum of Understanding, RSVP requires that each volunteer station provide training and the equipment or materials that are necessary for the volunteer assignment. This includes the volunteer stations in the Primary Focus Area and Capacity Building. Volunteer Job Descriptions will be discussed with the volunteers for complete understanding of the volunteer assignments. A Volunteer Handbook is provided to new volunteers and updates are included in monthly newsletters. Volunteers who work in the Primary Focus Area, Healthy Futures with the meals and food distribution will be trained in proper food handling and courtesy to the clients receiving meals or food. Stations are encouraged to share volunteer handbooks or to develop a handbook including all of the policies and procedures at the respective station. Volunteers working in the Companionship will receive information regarding phone calls, home visits and access to community information that is of benefit to the homebound and disabled. Capacity Building volunteers will receive appropriate training through respective stations.

Recruit Volunteer Pool: RSVP offers a variety of opportunities for volunteers to serve. RSVP is always exploring new ways to recruit new volunteers and retain current members. The visibility of the program helps with the recruitment. Local newspaper articles, newsletters and recruitment drives are utilized to recruit volunteers, as well as community flyers, brochures and word of mouth. The #1 reason people volunteer is because they are asked. Keeping this fact in mind, the staff constantly asks prospective volunteers to join the program, visiting retirement centers, clubs, senior centers, senior citizen housing or anywhere people over 55 gather. Referrals are made by current volunteers. The program provides diverse projects and considers flexible hours for volunteers, making sure our programs are accessible to all, no matter their race, gender, age, income, sexual orientations, religion or ethnicity. The population of the area are English speaking, but resources are available should the need arise for Spanish materials. Every effort is made to match volunteers with the need of the stations. Special efforts are made to include persons with disabilities and hard to reach individuals,

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recruiting those volunteers in the same way as any other volunteer, emphasizing that there is a volunteer opportunity for anyone wishing to share their talents. For volunteers with disabilities and individuals with age-related disabilities, the RSVP staff works with the volunteer and the station to find opportunities that will accommodate the specific disability in a relationship that is beneficial to both the volunteer and the volunteer station. This may include scheduling shorter hours, being able to sit or rest as needed while on assignment or obtaining equipment and supplies that make the assignments possible. Recruitment efforts are designed to attract, motivate and increase the number of participants in the program and allow them the challenge to take a leadership role in the community, utilizing skills and talents gained throughout their lifetime and during their working years. Veterans and military family members are a key group of individuals that will be the focus of recruitment as potential volunteers during the grant period. Plans are to identify current volunteers that are Veterans and military family members.

Retain and Recognize Volunteers: In an effort to retain volunteers, the RSVP staff and Advisory Council conducts a Volunteer Satisfaction Survey to gather information once a year regarding the volunteer's level of satisfaction with the program and their specific assignments, to express concerns, interests, or other observations. The comments and recommendations are incorporated into future program planning. Through these methods, a good core group of volunteers remain loyal to the program. The staff realizes the importance of regular communication with volunteers and publishes an extensive monthly newsletter, which is made possible through the sponsor's printing department. As indicated in the volunteer survey, the newsletter continues to be a very popular monthly correspondence. The letter is very well-read and so an excellent method to keep volunteers informed of policies, volunteer opportunities, announcements, volunteer awards, and upcoming events. The timesheet forms are included and a reference list of other ways to submit information to the office, as well as an easy return address page. The newsletter also offers the volunteers the opportunity to submit items for the newsletter and a "Let's Talk" page to discuss issues with the staff. Prompt attention to any issues or concern is taken seriously. The monthly letter continues to make volunteers feel connected to the program. Personal notes of thanks are also important. Several factors ensure good retention numbers: providing training, monthly correspondence through the newsletters, cards for special occasions and other correspondence, award events and other recognition events. Work stations are encouraged to thank and recognize their volunteers on an ongoing basis. Volunteers also feel connected to the program and to other volunteers and wish to remain a part of the program with

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regularly scheduled award events. Currently award events are held in the fall, recognizing volunteers individually and conducting a fellowship event for volunteers. Each spring, an annual recognition banquet and dance is held that is the highlight of the year for the volunteers, including a full dinner, games, prizes, recognition gifts and dancing. Many volunteers comment that it feels like a high school prom, as it is that important! Colby Community College students assist with this event and share in an evening of fellowship and dancing with the volunteers, which is always enjoyed by both generations.

Program Management

Management of Volunteer Stations:

RSVP will ensure that each volunteer station completes a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) every 3 years. The MOU lists the agreement between RSVP and the volunteer station in order to meet the RSVP Program regulations. The current list of prohibited activities and the safety checklist are part of the MOU and are discussed during the update of the MOU. Program staff have a positive open relationship with volunteer stations, keeping in touch through visits, e-mail and postal mail. Visits to the stations are a vital element of the plan to track compliance with the RSVP regulations. RSVP staff being visible at the volunteer's work station is also a great way to show the volunteers that their volunteer assignment is taken very seriously. The volunteer stations receive the monthly RSVP newsletter and other updates as needed. An updated memorandum is signed at the time there is a change in a supervisor, if before the required 3 years. The interaction with the stations and contact with the supervisors allows the RSVP staff to see the volunteer activities taking place and to help prevent any prohibited activities. A volunteer station handbook is made available to all stations that includes rules and regulations. Updates to this handbook are made available to the stations and a new handbook is published as needed.

Graduating Stations: A new policy will be developed and included in the station policy and procedures manual to meet the changing community needs, National Performance Measures and the changes to current volunteers. This policy will include offering a new volunteer opportunity or assignment in alignment with the new focus areas. Training will be provided to the volunteers that choose to move to a new assignment. Stations will be made aware of the details of why a station is to be graduated. It will also be explained that if the volunteers can perform capacity building services that supports a National Performance Measure the station may be able to remain a part of the program. Each station or volunteer case will be dealt with case by case regarding the new guidelines.

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RSVP's Track Record in Primary Focus Area: RSVP has an excellent track record in the Primary Focus Area of Healthy Futures and has for many years. Tools for collection of the National Performance Measures outputs and outcomes have been created and updated with the help of the Corporation for National Service trainings and resource materials that are available. The tools have been implemented to collect the needed data and prepare the proper reports for the grants. Past reporting has always been accurate and timely. Instructions for all collection tools will be given to volunteers and stations that are required to complete the information, especially those in the Primary Focus Area. Other agencies will also be contacted to provide needed data, such as the Northwest Kansas Area Agency on Aging Nutrition project for home delivered meals reports. The information will be completed and compiled in a timely manner for future reporting.

Compliance with Federal Regulations: All RSVP federal regulations will be reviewed on a regular basis and will be a part of the RSVP Policies and Procedures Manual used by RSVP staff. The sponsor and staff will follow the Federal Regulations, and will become very familiar with these regulations, reviewing the electronic updates of these regulations to remain current. The regulations affecting the volunteer stations will be made available to the stations, including the required MOU requirement. The requirement ensuring that the volunteers are eligible to serve in RSVP will be addressed at the time the volunteer completes the Volunteer Registration Form. The RSVP Advisory Council has been established and will continue to guide the program, with new community members being sought for the council regularly.

Organizational Capability

Sound Programmatic and Fiscal Oversight, Operational Support:

All project resources both financial and in-kind are managed through policies and procedures set in place by the RSVP sponsor, Colby Community College. The policies are outlined in the Financial Management Policy. The college and RSVP comply with all terms and conditions of the grant that are on the Corporation's website, as well as the special conditions on each RSVP notice of grant award. College employees are trained in all financial operations. The college maintains a very high level of checks and balances in its fiscal management, including a review and approval process designed to ensure accurate budget management. A very complex purchase order and computer system is used for management of expenses, income and reporting. The college's cost reimbursement policy for expenses is as followed. Requests are submitted to the college employee responsible for the grant

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records, requests are compared to the budget for available funds, purchase orders are prepared, indicating the appropriate account number and, purchase orders are approved and signed by the Chief Financial Officer. The checks are prepared by Accounts Payable and signed by the Chief Financial Officer and designated Board of Trustees members. The college office maintains all records using Microsoft Dynamics Great Plains computer software. All hard copies are maintained including original receipts, completed purchase orders and copies of checks. The hard copies are kept on file for a minimum of seven years. The completed checks and copies of purchase orders are returned to the RSVP staff to be mailed or delivered to the vendors. The RSVP program office maintains the financial cuff records and also uses computer software to track and reconcile with the college records. A copy of the college spreadsheets are provided to the RSVP Office to reconcile and assure that the purchase orders were properly processed each month. Monthly budget reports are maintained in Microsoft Excel computer software by departments. The RSVP Staff compares prices, when possible, for services and products, assuring the best price and efficient use of the RSVP resources. Local income (donations and memorial checks) is deposited through the college Controller using a funds transmittal form, with a copy maintained at the college and one to the RSVP office. In-kind is also recorded into the purchase order system and spreadsheet, with the appropriate documents attached. In-kind is received from local businesses and agencies for recognition events, as well as sponsor in-kind including fringe benefits and printing. Bank statements are received by the college and reconciled on a regular basis. After the expenditures have been reconciled for errors, federal funds are drawn down from the PMS system, keeping in compliance with HHS, so as to disburse the funds immediately. With the use of the computer records, required RSVP financial reporting, including Federal Financial Reports in both e-grants and Health & Human Services (HHS) Payment Management System is completed by the college Controller with assistance from the RSVP staff and is always completed in a timely manner, as specified by RSVP program regulations. All reports are printed from the respective websites and kept on file at both the college and the RSVP Office. Data measurement and PPR reporting is performed by the RSVP staff, as specified by RSVP program regulations. The college is audited annually, using the same auditor for five consecutive years, at which time the auditing company is re-bid. Technology is kept up to date, the college recently updated their Microsoft Dynamics Great Plains computer system to an automated payroll system. RSVP staff adhere to all college policies as defined in the Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual in regards to leave forms for sick and vacation leave as stated in the employee contract, drug-free workplace, fringe benefits offered, holidays, and evaluation processes. Travel policy states that travel

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expenses are allowed for all approved expenses incurred during college-related travel. Personnel records are kept on file at the college, including job descriptions that identify staff roles and responsibilities. RSVP staff performance is evaluated annually by college supervisors, reviewed by the supervisor and employee and kept on file at the college. The college will conduct criminal history checks on all grant-funded staff employed on or after October 1, 2009, in accordance with the requirements.

All program records are kept on file at the RSVP Office, including hard copy and electronic. Volunteer hours are submitted by volunteers and stations according to the program regulations. Volunteer hours, sent by either the volunteer or the station may be mailed using a timesheet that is included in each monthly newsletter, with signatures; may be e-mailed, telephoned, faxed or dropped off to the RSVP office. Volunteer hours are tabulated by volunteer and work station and entered into the Volunteer Reporter software, purchased from the company Volsoft.com. The Volunteer Reporter has many features that help create custom reports, spreadsheets, mail merges, volunteer profiles and is most valuable in managing the volunteer information. The software is updated annually by the company, including technical support. The technical support feature is utilized extensively by RSVP staff to ensure that the software is being used to its fullest potential. The software allows the information for CNCS reporting to be easily accessible. In addition to the information on the Volunteer Reporter, files are kept for all individual volunteers and work stations. Volunteer files include the required information including Volunteer Registration Form, updates to the registration form (updated regularly) volunteer job descriptions and more as needed. Work station files include the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) renegotiated every 3 years or sooner if station personnel changes, non-profit status, volunteer job descriptions and volunteer lists per station. Risk management policies are maintained, including appropriate insurance coverage for RSVP volunteers through the CIMA Insurance Company. RSVP volunteers are covered by excess accident insurance and personal liability insurance, as well as excess automobile liability.

Staff positions: The RSVP director, Laura Withington assumes full-time responsibility for the operation of the RSVP. As stated in the RSVP Director job description (attachment to the grant application), the director is the sponsoring organization's designated staff member to manage the RSVP. The director works cooperatively with other sponsor staff, Community Advisory Group members, volunteer station staff, and officials of the Corporation for National and Community

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Service to program, plan and implement the RSVP project. The director is also responsible for public relations and maintenance of program records. The RSVP director and the college have a very healthy and respected relationship and have for years, which enables the RSVP program to meet the program's mission and objectives. Laura has served the program thirty years as director and two years as assistant, for a total of thirty-two years with senior volunteers. Laura graduated from the local high school and Colby Community College. She is well-known and respected and is very familiar with the community, having lived in the area all of her life. Colby Community College provides the expertise of their staff to work with the program as well. The Vice-President of Academic Affairs (Greg Nichols) provides Laura with supervisory assistance. The Colby Community College public information director (Debbie Schwanke) assists in media coverage of the program including RSVP in college information as well as specific news articles about RSVP. Financial expertise with the records and reporting is handled by Colby Community College's Controller (Christine Ellison) with years of experience in accounting. She also has guidance from the Vice-President of Business Affairs. (Glenda Overstreet) The college mail clerk (Rita Billips) maintains an on-campus mail box for the RSVP program for college related information as well as outside mail. The mail clerk is a very important resource for RSVP as she constantly keeps staff informed of postal changes, mail preparation procedures and current mail regulations. In addition, highly capable computer experts from the college are available for assistance to RSVP as needed to update computer systems and current e-mail system that is in conjunction with the college's system.

The college and RSVP realize that it is important to continually improve their services and programs by applying what they learn through self-reflection, assessment, evaluation and use of data, knowledge building, and the use of sound and sensible financial management practices. For this reason, the Self-Assessment is conducted by the program to evaluate and ensure a high quality program as well as to determine the strengths and weaknesses. The assessment allows the program to evaluate, make improvements as needed and continue to grow and impact the community. The community survey, conducted periodically assesses the accomplishments and impact of the program on community needs and allows the program to make improvements.

Track Record: Self-reflection is being put to the test as the college prepares for the upcoming accreditation process being conducted in 2014 through the North Central Association (NCA). The institution was granted candidate status in March of 1969 and has been accredited as an associate

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degree granting institution since March of 1972. The last self-study was 2004. The college has proven to be the perfect match to sponsor the RSVP program. Colby Community College is known for its ability to respond to a variety of needs; their work with the older generation continues to be a very imperative need. The college serves the older generation offering computer and internet classes, tour-guided trips, aqua size and aerobic classes. The commitment of the sponsor is demonstrated by the fact that the college assigns the Vice-President of Academic Affairs to oversee the RSVP program. RSVP, under the sponsorship of Colby Community College has forty-two years of experience in managing senior volunteers, which proves the program's success and the strong relationship with the sponsor and community. The college's complex accounting system and the very knowledgeable staff have allowed the program to have an excellent past experience for the past forty-two years managing the federal grant funds for RSVP. In addition, Colby Community College also successfully manages other federal grants, as listed in the audit and federal grant list documents.

Capital assets: The program's sponsor enhances the program's capacity to assure the program has adequate facilities, equipment, supplies, purchasing procedures and personnel management support. They provide the program with equipment use (printing department, transportation) and supplies. Meeting space is also available for RSVP use.

Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A