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Executive Summary

"An estimated 262 RSVP volunteers will serve in Mecosta, Osceola and Lake Counties. The primary focus area of this RSVP project is Healthy Futures. Volunteers will serve the community by driving older adults to medical appointments in this medically underserved region, and distributing food to families and individuals who are food insecure. Other priority areas include tutoring individuals to successfully pass the GED test, helping individuals become safer and more prepared to weather emergencies, and helping the community maintain its natural beauty through environmental cleanup. At the end of the three-year grant, 751 will have reached medical appointments and maintained or improved their current health status. Another 1126 individuals and families will have improved food security due to food distribution by RSVP volunteers working at local food pantries. The CNCS federal Investment of \$45,257.00 will be supplemented by \$ 68,679.00 from non-federal sources.

Strengthening Communities

The Retired and Senior Program (RSVP), sponsored by Mecosta County Council on Aging, serves and promotes the well-being of the seniors in Mecosta, Osceola and Lake Counties. The RSVP program enables senior citizens 55 and older the opportunity to participate in community activities while serving their neighbors, and the agencies and organizations that support the villages, towns and cities in Mecosta, Osceola and Lake Counties.

The percentage of older adults over the age of 65 living in these counties is higher than the Michigan average of 15%. Mecosta County has an average of 16.6% of people over the age of 65, Osceola County has 18.5% and Lake County has 25.7% of the population 65 or older (US Census: American Community Survey 2008-2012). These three counties also have higher rates of poverty than the Michigan average of 16.3%, and the national average of 14.9%. Almost a quarter (24.1%) of Lake County, 22.9% of Mecosta residents, 20.0% of Osceola residents live below poverty (US Census: American Community Survey 2008-2012). Older residents are more likely than their younger neighbors to have medical conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and other chronic diseases that require careful ongoing monitoring from medical professionals. The baby boomer bubble moving into retirement age will have an enormous impact on local resources. "The rapidly increasing number of older Americans has far-reaching implications for our nation's public health system and will place unprecedented demands on the provision of health care and aging-related services." (Centers for Disease Control, Implications of an Aging Society.) Compounding the

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problem, Mecosta, Osceola and Lake Counties are already designated as Medically Underserved Areas (MUA) and Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) indicating limitations in health professionals or facilities serving the counties, and access issues for low income residents or other groups. While all three counties have fewer than 3 physicians within a 10 mile distance for some area residents, Lake County is particularly medically resource poor. Both Osceola and Mecosta Counties have hospitals, Lake County does not. In addition, the University of Wisconsin, in collaboration with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation ranks all counties in the United States on health outcomes tracking death rates from chronic conditions and health factors such as access to care, poverty and other factors affecting health. While Mecosta and Osceola hover in the middle of the pack for health outcome and health factor rankings (Mecosta ranked 31 out of 82 Michigan counties for health outcomes, 42 out of 82 for health factors, Osceola ranked 36 out of 82 counties for health outcomes and 65 out of 82 counties for health factors), Lake County has one of the lowest scores, ranking 78th out of 82 counties for health outcomes, and 81st out of 82 counties for health factors. (County Health Rankings 2013, Robert Wood Johnson and the University of Wisconsin.) Clearly, access to medical care is a critical issue for Lake County residents of all ages, but particularly Lake County seniors.

Unfortunately, as a rural county, Lake County has very limited transportation resources. The one transportation resource only operates within the county borders and does not travel to the nearby counties with hospitals and more medical professionals. Transportation resources in Mecosta and Osceola are better but options are still limited with public transportation limited to weekdays within a window of 8 to 5 pm. RSVP has 132 medical drivers that provide transportation services for older adults who need to travel to hospitals and medical professionals in Mecosta and Osceola Counties. Drivers will be screened for driving records, and insurance coverage. Cars of medical drivers will be evaluated to ensure that cars are safe and reliable vehicles. All drivers will be instructed in rules and protocols for picking up patients at their homes, driving to appointments and completing paperwork including mileage, time spent on the trip, and asking people to fill out an evaluation at the completion of the trip. The evaluation will include the number of people transported, number of trips, and questions required for CNCS national performance measures.

Food security is an important issue for both individuals and families as the impact of inadequate nutrition can be catastrophic for all age groups. Good nutrition is critically important for children to learn and thrive. Children who experience hunger have difficulty learning, perform poorly in school, and have difficulty forming social relationships, ("Child Nutrition and Cognitive Development "

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Speaking Points," The Tufts University School of Nutrition Science and Policy: Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy, 1998.) Older individuals need adequate nutrition to aid in healing, support cognitive functioning, and managing chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. (Online nutrition screening tool helps older adults identify if they have risk factors leading to poor nutrition, Dieticians of Canada, Toronto, Canada, 2013). Mecosta, Osceola, and Lake Counties have a large number of households at high risk for food insecurity. All three counties have a higher than the state average number of households in poverty (16.1%). Mecosta County's poverty rate is 22.9%, 20.0% of those in Osceola County and 24.1% of those in Lake County live in poverty. (American Community Survey, 2008-2012). In addition, 31.4% of families with children in Mecosta County, 32.1% of families with children in Osceola County and 41.2% of families with children in Lake County received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (Ibid). Another 25% of families with children in these counties had inadequate food supplies but they were ineligible for assistance (Feeding America 2011).

Forty-nine RSVP volunteers will assist with the distribution of food to low income residents of Mecosta, Osceola and Lake Counties at local food shelters. Volunteers will be assigned to the food bank to prepare boxes or bags of nutritious food for distribution on designated days within each county. Volunteers will be instructed at individual sites regarding protocols and procedures for food distribution. Volunteers will be instructed to complete paperwork documenting hours, and number of individuals and families served during their shifts in order to document CNCS national performance measure requirements. In addition, those receiving food will be asked to indicate if the food helps them be more food secure.

In most of the Mecosta, Osceola, Lake County area, educational outcomes tend to be worse than other parts of the state on average. Dropout rates in the Mecosta-Osceola Intermediate School District ranges from 8.3% to 15%, considerably more than the 10.5% Michigan State average (Michigan Dept. of Technology, Management, and Budget Center for Educational Performance Information (School Year 2012-2013)).

The number of economically disadvantaged youth ranges from 57.3% to 70.6% in these same school systems. It is even worse in Lake County. The dropout rate in the Baldwin school system is 29.3% almost 3 times the state average. In this same school system, 93.4% are economically disadvantaged (Ibid).

Research demonstrates that individuals who drop out of school but earn a GED do better in life than

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their non-GED peers. Those completing their GEDs have higher earnings (Alliance for Excellent Education), are more likely to go on to college (National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy), Have better job opportunities, and job retention (Iowa Department of Education). A GED may be particularly important in Lake County where the unemployment rate is 5 points higher than the Michigan average of 8.8%, and the poverty rate in Lake is 8% higher than the state average of 16%.

Ten RSVP volunteers will work with Michigan Works to tutor former high school students in reading, writing and mathematics to meet their goal of earning a GED. Volunteers will be assigned to work with students in a group setting, or through one-on-one meetings based on the results of student pre-GED assessments. Volunteers will continue to work with students through successful completion of the GED test. Tutoring sessions will take place once or twice a week for 2 hours at each session.

Osceola's emergency mitigation plan most recently revised in July 2014 lists emergency events that commonly occur in the county and mitigation plans to address those events. Winter weather events are on the rise and since 1996; there are 3.14 winter weather events per year occurring between December and March (Osceola County Hazard Mitigation Plans, July 2014). These weather events create problems associated with extended power outages, impassable roads and interruption of in home support services.

There is high likelihood of transportation related casualty events due to the convergence of highways leading to tourist destinations in Northern Michigan. As stated in the report "The major concern with transportation and mass casualty incidents in the jurisdiction results directly from limited ambulance and medical resources." Flooding events are also common in Osceola County with .62 events per year that result in community disruption due to evacuation to escape flood waters, power outages, and road closures.

There have also been major fires with a special fire hazard due to the storage and recycling of tires at two different businesses. In April 1997, a fire in one tire storage area burned for over 2 days causing the evacuation of a 3 mile area surrounding the fire zone. In addition, the potential for wildfires exists due to the county's abundance of natural forests.

Mecosta County is also prone to floods impacting local residents and they detail strategies for residents to be better prepared to handle the emergency impacts. The report recommends improving flood awareness through outreach, and suggests many ways residents can be prepared to handle floods (Mecosta County Resilience Report, 2012).

Preparedness involves all people in the community, and when more citizens are prepared to help their

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families and neighbors it frees up first responders to help in others. New York has started Citizen Preparedness Corps to educate citizens to be prepared to help themselves and their neighbors. "Severe weather events are becoming more frequent and extreme and to make sure that our communities are safe, we need more New Yorkers than ever to be prepared and trained to respond," said Governor Cuomo. "The Citizen Preparedness Corps Training Program will train 100,000 citizens to help provide crucial and critical assistance in their own homes or in their own communities whenever disaster strikes." (Governor Cuomo Launches Citizen Preparedness Corps Training Program, January 27, 2014).

Mecosta, Osceola and Lake Counties have their own version of Citizen Preparedness Corps called Camp 911. The RSVP Program of Mecosta County Council on Aging will partner with 16 community organizations for Camp 911. Ten RSVP volunteers will help with the planning and implementation of Camp 911, developing presentations, outreach materials, handouts, and activities. They will also help implement the day long camp for at least 120 participants from the three county areas. During the planning and development phase, volunteers will volunteer at least 2 hours a month attending meetings and assisting with materials. The 10 volunteers will all work during the actual camp to provide logistical, training or other support services.

RSVP of Mecosta, Osceola and Lake Counties also provide volunteers to serve with recycling and highway clean up. These counties are known for their beauty and natural resources and many tourists come to the area for camping and fishing. Highway and nature area cleanup is an important service to maintain natural beauty and to continue to attract visitors to the area.

Veterans are an important service population for RSVP. More than 15 volunteers serving in RSVP are veterans. Many of those served with medical transportation are veterans of service in World War II, the Korean and Vietnam Wars. We will routinely collect information on veteran status for all people served in the priority area of Healthy Futures.

It is very important to document how the service of RSVP volunteers benefits the community, and how the individuals who provide the service are impacted in a positive way. RSVP will comply with all CNCS requirements regarding data collection, data reporting and record keeping. It is also important to demonstrate impact to all funders supporting the activities of the RSVP.

Several data collection activities will be implemented to support outcome based data collection on over 80% of RSVP service provision. First, service specific, point of service data will be collected on a continuing basis. Those volunteers providing medical transportation will keep track of the trips they complete and the people they assist to be able to complete measure H8: Number of homebound OR

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older adults and individuals with disabilities receiving food. They will ask their riders if they are veterans to be able to answer measure V1: Number of veterans that received CNCS-supported assistance. Those volunteers providing tutoring for GED preparation and completion will track the number of hours and the number of students they tutor to measure ED27: Number of students in grades K-12 that participated in the mentoring or tutoring or other education program, including CNCS-supported service learning, who demonstrated improved academic engagement. Those volunteers working in Camp 911 will count the number of people from the community that participate to measure D1: Number of individuals that received CNCS-supported services in disaster preparedness.

RSVP of Mecosta, Osceola and Lake Counties already asks prospective volunteers if they are veterans; we will ensure that this question is answered routinely on all new volunteer applications in support of measurement V2: Number of veterans engaged in service opportunities.

Recruitment and Development

RSVP of Mecosta, Osceola and Lake Counties, through their long history of serving the community, and continuous monitoring of the volunteer experiences, understands that volunteerism helps both the community and the volunteer. A recent meta-analysis of 40 articles researching the benefits of volunteerism shows positive effects on depression, life satisfaction, and wellbeing (Jenkinson, C.F, et.al. 2013). Michigan has a history of evaluating the senior volunteer programs and results indicate that volunteers enjoy giving back to their communities, believe their time is used wisely, and have increased their social contacts as a volunteer (State of Michigan Senior Volunteer Program Evaluation, RSVP of Mecosta, Osceola, 2011). RSVP volunteers serve in a variety of settings as mentioned previously. Volunteer service assignments are geared to the preferences of the volunteer and their strengths. If volunteers prefer volunteering with others, that can be accommodated and supported in the RSVP program of Mecosta, Osceola and Lake Counties.

Volunteer recruitment is accomplished using multiple methods including local newspapers such as the Pioneer Press, Lake County Star and the Osceola Herald Review, area newsletters, and local volunteer sites. Past experience demonstrates that one of the most effective recruitment strategies is word of mouth from current volunteers to their peers. RSVP works to ensure that volunteers have a rewarding and enriching experience and then recruit their friends into volunteer service. Continuous quality improvement is important and volunteers are surveyed to evaluate their experience, and results of the survey are used to plan future activities. We also reimburse volunteers for their expenses when driving as part of their volunteer service so no volunteer has to pay out of pocket to serve their

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communities.

The process of working with 94 different non-profit, private, faith-based and governmental agencies builds RSVP's recognition in the community; this recognition enhances the program's ability to connect with a diversity of seniors. The RSVP director is a member of the Mecosta County Human Service Collaborative representing 50 non-profit agencies, Lake County's Council on Aging, and local Chambers of Commerce in order to stay abreast of emerging community needs. RSVP also reaches out to area businesses and corporations to connect with workers who may be near retirement to provide information about volunteer opportunities with RSVP.

RSVP has a strict non-discrimination policy regarding volunteer recruitment: no person will be turned away based on age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity or sexual identification. Currently, RSVP has 262 volunteers. The overwhelming majority of volunteers (95.7%) identifying as white, 2% identify as Black or African/American and 1% identify as Asian. While this racial diversity is reflective of Mecosta and Osceola County profiles, it is not reflective of Lake County with 87% identifying as White, and 9.2% identifying as Black or African/American. Recruitment strategies for more diversity will be developed with the assistance of current volunteers to develop more effective outreach particularly in Lake County.

The average age of current RSVP volunteers is 74, with a mix of older and younger senior volunteers; 19.4% are under age 67, 41.5% are age 68-74, and 39.1% are 75 or older. We currently have 15 volunteers who are veterans and we actively encourage other veterans to participate in volunteerism. We provide many different types of volunteer activities that can include everyone. For those with mobility challenges, we provide opportunities at the RSVP office that can be accomplished while sitting. These volunteer activities often provide a social opportunity when we bring in people to work together. Volunteers with mobility challenges can also work well with children in mentoring and tutoring roles. Recognition comes in several forms.

When a new volunteer enrolls in RSVP, they are asked to fill out an application which asks for personal information including contact information, demographic information and their past experience with employment, military service, and volunteerism. A background check is performed using the Michigan State Police ICHAT System before assigning a volunteer to any site. RSVP does not use any volunteers with felony arrests. Volunteers will be considered if they received a driving ticket or misdemeanor more than 20-30 years ago. When prospective volunteers successfully pass their background check, they are asked to participate in an interview and orientation. The interview is a tool to learn more about the volunteer and the type of activities and service he/she is interested in

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providing. A manual called "Everything a Volunteer Needs to Know about RSVP" guides the orientation. New volunteers are instructed in RSVP policies and procedures regarding training, the volunteer role, the RSVP infrastructure, stations and sites, mileage reimbursement and insurance. Volunteers are also informed that some sites will involve more intense background check procedures including taking fingerprints.

Depending on availability, an attempt is made to engage new volunteers in service soon after their initial orientation. Often the first volunteer opportunities are located close to their place of residence as they acclimate to the program.

Certain assignments involve additional information and more training geared toward the requirements of the service. Those recruited for medical driving provide additional information about their driving record, insurance, and pass the AARP safe driver course provided by AARP for senior drivers. Medical drivers also have their car inspected prior to beginning medical driving. Medical drivers are instructed how to navigate in the tri-county area, timing for ride pickups, responsibilities when they have a medical rider in their vehicle, drop off procedures at an area medical provider, and return trips. Volunteers are counseled on maintaining confidentiality of their rider's medical trip information if it is disclosed by the rider during conversation with the driver.

Volunteers involved in Camp 911 also receive training depending on their role in the planning, development and implementation of the program. Volunteers involved in planning are provided with an overview of the program. Since the Camp has been run for a number of years, more experienced volunteers and the RSVP Director mentor the newer volunteers in activities related to planning and coordination. Prior to Camp 911, training is held for volunteers who will assist with the various activities related to the camp. These volunteers will participate all day in teaching area seniors about preparedness for emergencies, as well as how to be safe and avoid becoming victims of criminal activity.

Volunteers involved in tutoring for literacy receive at least 10.5 hours of training to become certified tutors. RSVP also provides a literacy training program for adults which is underwritten by community grants (Great Lake Energy People Foundation, Friends of the Library, General Mills). Ten RSVP volunteers took part in literacy training in 2014.

An important component of volunteer management is recognition for volunteers based in service to the community. RSVP holds a recognition event every year in June. Invitations are extended to all volunteers and representatives from governmental and partner organizations. All volunteers receive special gifts each year regardless if they attend or not. Special recognition is also provided based on

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hours of service to the community. Volunteers receive a certificate after their first 1000 hours of service, followed by pins and plaques at 4000, 5000, 8000, and 10,000 volunteer hours. (The most service provided by an active volunteer is 46,600 hours.) Each year a Volunteer of the Year is recognized, a tradition that has been maintained for the 41 years the program has been in existence. RSVP underwrites the cost of the recognition event and it is planned by the RSVP Advisory Council in collaboration with the RSVP director.

Program Management

Our mission of serving the community with quality volunteer service is supported by our commitment to work collaboratively with community organizations to develop high quality volunteer assignments that meet community needs and provide interesting volunteer opportunities for seniors. This collaborative relationship starts with the director and coordinator participating in human services, community and business meetings in Mecosta, Osceola and Lake Counties. RSVP staff members also monitor local newspapers and other media to ensure we are keeping current with local events and community needs. Staff members need to be constantly reflecting how RSVP volunteers can be part of the solution for community needs.

The basis for all work with local partner agencies starts with a signed MOU. When a new station requests help from RSVP, the RSVP director talks with the station's administrator to find out what they may need in volunteer service. At this meeting, the RSVP director evaluates whether the project fits into the CNCS six priority areas and if it serves a community need that has measureable outcomes. If there is good fit between priority needs and the volunteer program, than the discussion goes into more detail about RSVP. The station representative is informed of what RSVP can provide in volunteer service, and what the steps need to be completed including signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that lists the responsibilities of each party and who will oversee the volunteers at the station.

The request is then forwarded to the volunteer coordinator, Linda Newton. She ensure that station signs the MOU, answers questions from the station that arise, and helps the site write a written job description, number of volunteers needed, dates, times and place of volunteer activity recorded on a form that can used as a reference.

The MOUs are the agreements between RSVP and the station. The station supervisor is asked to indicate if this is a public agency, private non-profit organization, proprietary healthcare facility, or faith-based organization. There is a listing for RSVP Station Responsibilities: The station (1) Makes the final decision on assignment of volunteers, (2) Implements orientation, in-service instruction or

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special training of volunteers, (3) Furnishes volunteers with any materials or transportation required for assignments, (4) Provides for adequate safety of volunteers, (5) Signs and validates appropriate volunteer reports for submission to RSVP, (6) Investigates and reports accidents and injuries involving volunteers to RSVP (7) Discusses assignments with individual volunteers referred to RSVP and provides written assignment to volunteers, with a copy to the RSVP Program, (8) Provides supervision of volunteers on assignments, (9) Provides public liability and automobile liability insurance, as appropriate, (10) Supplies in-kind vouchers to RSVP to verify support when meals, recognition, transportation or training have been provided to volunteers, (11) Validates (sign) monthly volunteer time sheets submitted by RSVP volunteers to verify hours of volunteer service (monthly time sheets are due in the RSVP office by the 5th of the following month), (12) Provide Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation. (The Volunteer Station will maintain the programs and activities to which RSVP volunteers are assigned accessible to persons with disabilities (including mobility, hearing, vision, mental, and cognitive impairments or addictions and diseases) and/or limited English language proficiency and provide reasonable accommodation to allow persons with disabilities to participate in programs and activities.), (13) Observe and enforce Prohibition of Discrimination: The volunteer station must not discriminate against RSVP volunteers or in the operation of its program on the basis of race; color; national origin, including limited English proficiency; sex; age; political affiliation; sexual orientation; religion; or on the basis of disability.

The volunteer station may request the removal of a senior volunteer at any time. The RSVP volunteer may withdraw from service at the volunteer station or from the RSVP program at any time.

Discussion of the individual's separation will occur among RSVP staff, volunteer station staff, and the volunteer to clarify the reasons, resolve the conflicts or take remedial action, including placement with another volunteer station. The station will include with the MOU a written assignment for the volunteer, the station supervisor will sign the front page of the MOU, sending the original to RSVP and keeping a copy for their organization.

The MOU is renewable every three years except when there is a change of Station Supervisor, this change requires a new MOU at that time. The Job Description sheet allows for updating this original form at any time. The Request Form is an ongoing document submitted to RSVP for daily/weekly/monthly requests. We continue to recruit and manage volunteer stations that address specified unmet community needs that are not included in our Primary Focus Area.

Once the MOU is signed detailing the items mentioned above, Linda Newton, the volunteer coordinator implements the process of recruiting volunteers for the placement. This is done with the

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information on the volunteer registration form that each volunteer fills out. The RSVP registration form gives a brief overview of the volunteer skills, work history, likes and physical limits.

Linda will make personal calls to volunteers who expressed an interest in this type of assignment on their registration form. If the request calls for a certain skill that we don't have in our volunteer membership, community outreach appeal will be sent to current volunteers and a public service announcement will be written for local media requesting people with the set of skills needed. Sandy Dalrymple, will also attempt to connect with potential volunteers through community presentations. The Advisory Council is also a valuable resource when trying to get the word out in the community for volunteer recruitment.

Linda will keep in touch with both the volunteers and site to see that everything is going well. She can make adjustments, if the assignment doesn't fit the volunteer. The volunteer coordinator has regular contact with volunteers and will informally ask for feedback about the assignment. The volunteer coordinator also has frequent, informal communication with the station related to additional needs, potential issues, and other topics related to placement and service of volunteers.

RSVP, under its current director, Sandy Dalrymple, and volunteer coordinator, Linda Newton, have a long history of successfully developing new stations and assignments. Over time, there are occasions when stations must be deactivated, and reasons for deactivation are varied and can relate to changing community needs, stations or sites misusing, mismanaging volunteers or not following protocols established in the MOUs or other completing reasons. We will communicate our requirements and if we can no longer provide volunteers the RSVP director will communicate directly with station administrators about the decision to stop sending volunteers. If the site's request for RSVP volunteers is unmet than we try to suggest other places to get volunteer help including service clubs, local colleges and faith-based organizations that have volunteer groups. The RSVP Advisory Council is kept informed about the new station and their request for volunteers. If problems arise, the Advisory Council can make suggestions on how to solve the problem.

This effort to meet community needs is one reason why our primary focus is on Healthy Futures. Through our interaction with the RSVP Advisory Council, representatives from the health care community and transportation resources, we discovered the desperate need for access to health care transportation for older residents in Mecosta, Osceola and Lake Counties. Our medical transportation program has been in existence for 36 years. As our aging population increases over time, we know the need for medical transport and access to medical services will only grow. We collect information on all of our transportation clients and we are predominantly serving those over the age of 70. We also

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collect information on veteran status, and outcomes including if the person has access to other transportation sources and whether the ride to medical appointments allows the person to maintain or improve their current health status. For all people served through services allowing them to stay in their home, we ask if the service has increased their social opportunities as well.

RSVP also collects information from our stations on a regular basis as well to ensure that we are meeting needs and that our volunteers are well trained and monitored. Every year a survey is sent to all stations to gather information about how the RSVP program and its volunteers are doing. We solicit information about current unmet needs with this survey. From time to time, RSVP has also held community forums, inviting community leaders to share their perceptions with us about perceived community needs. In addition, our collaboration and partnering with a diverse group of organizations has helped us recognize emerging trends and needs. We collect emails and utilize web-based systems to collect evaluation information.

All data related to volunteers, stations, sites and locations are tracked in the Volunteer information System (VIS) maintained by the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging. RSVP staff is trained in procedures to accurately enter data and generate reports. VIS allows the RSVP staff to download reports detailing the number of hours and volunteers serving at each site. Data from volunteer time sheets is entered into VIS each month. Reports are generated as needed to report to Federal, State and Local funders. Records based on volunteer mileage can also be entered into VIS to track reimbursement costs.

RSVP will also collect outcome information for service under other community priorities. For Camp 911, we will continue to collect information about the people who attend and at the end of the camp we will ask participants if they improved their knowledge of public safety and emergency preparedness. We will continue to monitor the successful completion of GED requirements and testing with those adults working with RSVP tutors and mentors.

Organizational Capability

The Mecosta County Council on Aging for the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program in Big Rapids organized March 20, 1969 filing non-profit corporation papers with the State of Michigan. RSVP financial resources are from several sources as follows: Senior Millage of Osceola County \$3,600, Lake County Senior Millage \$11,880; United Way of Mecosta/Osceola Chapter \$10,500; Office of Service to the Aging \$13,561; Corporation for National and Community Service \$45,257; Mecosta County office space in-kind \$8,911; individual and organizational donations of varying amounts. The community contributions are disbursed and accounted for regularly on a continuous weekly,

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monthly, quarterly, annual and semi-annual basis. All grant requirements are met by state and federal programs. RSVP works to ensure programmatic effectiveness and access and availability for seniors in Mecosta, Osceola and Lake Counties. The RSVP office is centrally located in Mecosta County in an accessible space for persons with disabilities. Planning and allocation of resources within the volunteer program are handled in house by the two program staff.

All bookkeeping and paperwork related to funding and expenses are handled in the office by paid RSVP staff including payroll, expenditures, disbursements and grants processing and submission, are accomplished using computer software. Expenditures over \$500 require either two Mecosta COA Council Board member signatures or the signature of the executive director and another member of the COA Board. The Mecosta COA (7) board members and Finance Committee are independent of the RSVP program monitors expenditures, disbursements of funds and project performance for the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. The Council consists of volunteers from the local areas consisting of seven members including: an attorney, a home health care provider, a pharmacist, a retired State employee, a retired pharmaceutical employee, a retired plant manager and two volunteer members from the RSVP Advisory Council. Annually the Mecosta County Council on Aging meets and approves pay increases and allowable mileage increases or decreases after reviewing the flow of cash and expenses.

The two RSVP staff complete a programmatic assessment on compliance with funding requirements on an annual basis. Results of assessments are on file in the program office, in accordance with accepted practice. RSVP also maintains documentation of cooperative planning and sharing of resources with existing governmental and private agencies. The program frequently collaborates to plan activities and services, and to secure funding for multiple partners engaged in implementing community wide plans. Results of assessments and collaborative plans are shared with COA board members and community partners and stakeholders. Mecosta COA also provides management support for program operations.

RSVP financial activities are audited each year by a retired volunteer accountant. Internal controls are in place, but each staff person can cover the duties of the other staff person when a sick day or vacation takes place. Office procedures follow documented protocols covered in Mecosta COA policies reflective of CNCS and State of Michigan requirements. Policies detail the handling of cash, checks received, deposits, bill payment, ordering supplies, fundraising, appointments, refunds, staff travel, reimbursements, payroll tax withholding, and insurance policies.

AN RSVP Advisory Council functions to assist RSVP staff by reviewing plans and policies, providing

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advice on recruitment, fundraising, and recognition. The RSVP Advisory Council is a group of eleven (11) senior volunteers from Mecosta, Osceola, and Lake Counties that promote the RSVP program throughout their communities where they live. The volunteer Advisory Council meets the last Monday of each month. The Council does an evaluation of the RSVP Program during October including a survey distributed to all current volunteers and volunteer stations. Results are used to determine volunteer impact and outcomes; and to support future planning for the program. Volunteer involvement accomplishes the goals of the RSVP program and stations.

The Mecosta COA Council and the RSVP Advisory Council provide input on training, program expansion, policies and procedures based on federal, state and local requirements. Grievances and appeal procedures are in place and clearly defined. Liability and accident insurance for council members, volunteer and office staff is required.

The RSVP program within the Mecosta Council on Aging has the infrastructure for successful implementation of sound fiscal and programmatic policies and procedures. Sandy Dalrymple, Director, has full-time responsibility for the development and day-to-day operation of the RSVP Program. Sandy attended business college, and has received training in health care including pharmacy tech, health care assistant, EMT and LPN nursing. She has business experience in both retail and human service organizations. She has 20 years of experience working with RSVP, CNCS and the State of Michigan. Her duties include: assess community needs for volunteer service, plan and operate project operation in compliance with CNCS and MCCOA policies, recruit, orient and place volunteers, maintain fiscal and program records, develop and maintain coordination with volunteer stations, staff advisory council and keep council informed of pertinent issues, provide support and information to volunteers, assess volunteer performance, and develop financial resources for the project through grant writing.

RSVP Bookkeeper/Coordinator, Linda Newton, performs a variety of tasks in support of the RSVP. Linda attended business college. She has experience as a certified nursing assistance and extensive experience working in the court system at the probate, small claims, and county court level, as well as being an assistance county clerk. She has 25 years of experience working with RSVP and she: serves as a receptionist for the program, answering questions from prospective volunteers and station representatives, entering data into VIS and other management software tools, take requests for new volunteer services, coordinates volunteers with assignments, maintain service records and generate VIS reports as requested, and assist director with the preparation of reports.

RSVP Staff positions are sustained by Federal and State dollars and are reflected in the Budget/Budget

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Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A