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Executive Summary

SECTION A: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An estimated 600 RSVP volunteers will serve. Some of their activities will include Community-based, Public- and/or Faith-based School tutoring; Mentoring; Food distribution; Food pantry support; companionship. The primary focus area of this project is Education. At the end of the three-year grant, the anticipated outcome(s) are listed below. The CNCS federal investment of \$58,854 will be supplemented by \$77,130.

ED5. Number of students with improved academic performance in literacy and/or math.

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.

H9. Number of homebound OR older adults and individuals with disabilities who reported having increased social ties/perceived social support.

H12. Number of individuals that reported increased food security of themselves and their children (household food security) as a result of CNCS-supported services.

RSVP has a long-standing history of proudly serving Kent County with dedicated volunteers who have focused on providing service to at-risk K-12 students. Research has shown these activities to improve academic success including literacy and numeracy skill tutoring, mentoring, and other relationship-developing activities like playground attendant and library aide. In many cases, economically challenged families, especially those with single-parents, are unable to provide students with adequate academic support. RSVP is excited to supplement support to students, parents, and teaching staff through valuable activities that pair struggling students with a caring volunteer role model/tutor. Through investment and encouragement, the volunteers help motivate students to engage in behaviors such as attending class, setting goals, and working hard; and, also positively impact students' self esteem, all of which are linked to improvement and success. RSVP has also enjoyed a lengthy history serving Kent County with compassionate volunteers who have faithfully served the aging, homebound, and disabled populations by providing a sense of connectedness and companionship through friendly visiting and telephone reassurance calls. They have also engaged in service activities that address food security such as collecting and distributing food through mobile food trucks and food pantries, as well as commodity and congregate meal distribution sites, including

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our sponsor's 5 senior centers. RSVP is committed to maintaining its current partnerships that support Education and Healthy Futures measures while creating at least 10 new Education partner agencies, 10 new Healthy Futures partner agencies; and, recruiting at least 10 new volunteers to serve at each of the new partner agencies respectively for a total of 20 new partnerships and 200 new volunteers.

Strengthening Communities

SECTION B: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

2 Describe the community and demonstrate that the community need(s) identified in the Primary Focus Area that exist in the geographic service area.

Kent County, Michigan is composed of twenty-one townships, five villages and nine cities. The total area of the land in Kent County is 856.17 square miles (America at a Glance, 2011). The County seat is located in the City of Grand Rapids, which is the second largest city in the State. The Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), of which the County is the hub, has been one of the fastest growing regions of the US. In terms of population, Kent County is the fourth largest county in the State of Michigan, and growing. According to the 2000 Census, the County grew by 14.7% over the prior 10 years. Census 2013 estimates population at 621,700. Population of children in Kent County, according to 2012 GR Press article is 158,134, of which 40.8 percent are insured by Medicaid or MI Child. Population of children living in poverty is 20.3 %, leaving Kent County ranked 25th in the state. There are 26 school districts, five intermediate school districts, numerous non-public schools serving diversified religious denominations, and 17 charter schools located, in whole or in part, in the County. More demographics are provided in Section C; bullet point #3.

Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS), the 4th largest public school district in Michigan. According to a GRPS 2012 district publication, 18,125 students are enrolled in 71 schools within the district. Schools in this district are one of the major placement targets of our Primary Focus Area. 86% of the students are considered economically disadvantaged, compared to 45.4% statewide. In the fall 2012, 13,070, or 79.26% of students qualified for free lunches. When including those who were reduced-price lunch eligible, the percentage increases to 82.66%. Only 36% of students are proficient in reading and 25% in math. Economically disadvantaged students make up a large percentage of those students with a high probability of academic failure and drop-out. Nearly 23% of Kent County students did not graduate with their class in 2012. The GRPS district has a 7% dropout rate, grades 9-12 (national

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average 4.4%).

¿ Describe how the service activities of the volunteers in the Primary Focus Area lead to National Performance Measure output or outcomes.

Research (see below) related to providing before, during, or after school mentoring and tutoring has been linked to improving students¿ academic achievement, engagement, and attendance. According to United Way, students disengaged in school exhibit poor attendance and are at accelerated risk for dropping out. Disengagement, starts early, is often connected with undiagnosed disabilities, developmental delays, a lack of critical school readiness skills, and boredom or feeling unknown/not understood by anyone at school. RSVP volunteers will work together with Kent County area K-12 school instructors to provide numeracy and literacy tutoring, mentoring, and other academic support to instructor-selected, at-risk students.

Sources: http://unway.3cdn.net/59533b0250e4d88684_y9m6iq5bs.pdf - page 7;

[http://friendsofthechildrenboston.org/mentors/articles/Thompson,%20L.A.%20-](http://friendsofthechildrenboston.org/mentors/articles/Thompson,%20L.A.%20-%20Impact%20of%20Mentoring.pdf)

<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ925246.pdf> - page 2;

<http://umbmentoring.org/downloads/agents.pdf> - page 2

¿ Your plan and infrastructure to support data collection and ensure National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs are measured, collected, and managed.

RSVP will provide volunteers and partner agencies¿ with training for how to report volunteer time and unduplicated counts of students. Partner responsibilities listed in the MOU include conducting pre/post testing and provide periodic students¿ academic achievement and attendance progress reports to RSVP. The Director and/or trained staff will manage data collection to ensure the National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs are met. Staff trained in understanding outcomes and outputs will input data. Infrastructure: Trained full and part-time staff, computers, internet, email, data collection/reporting software, phones, fax, partner agencies, sponsor, and volunteers.

¿ Describe any activity in service to veterans and/or military families as part of service in the Primary Focus Area, Other Focus Areas or Capacity Building.

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We are engaging veterans in our Primary Focus Area. Veterans recruited through an existing VFW program, as well as other sites will provide presentations on various aspects of American history: previous wars and battles, patriotism etc. These presentations are designed to engage and foster initial veteran/student connection in a short-term format while developing a future focus of building longer-term mentor relationships between veterans and students in anticipation of the possibility of adding Veterans as a performance measure in the future. RSVP and instructors will collaboratively develop ways for students to use their literacy skills to provide feedback regarding the presentation like evaluations and surveys.

Recruitment and Development

SECTION C: RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

¿ Your plans and infrastructure to create well-developed high quality RSVP assignments with opportunities to share their experiences, abilities, and skills to improve their communities and themselves through service in their communities.

RSVP staff will discuss/secure signed MOUs and conduct site visits at potential partner agencies to check for environmental safety and compliance with racism free, accessibility, and safety standards at inception of partnership. RSVP staff will assist partner agencies with developing job descriptions that include job activities focused on designated outputs and outcomes. Written job descriptions will be provided to, and discussed with volunteers before serving. A copy will be retained in the volunteer and station files. RSVP staff will maintain annual contact, and review/update job descriptions and MOUs with each partner agency every three years. Trained RSVP staff will provide volunteers and partner agencies¿ key staff with RSVP orientation including RSVP policies/procedures, reporting volunteer time, and data tracking/collection requirements to ensure equal knowledge and understanding of all parties. Partner agencies will provide volunteers with job specific training as needed. Through the RSVP application process, volunteers self-report their experience, skills and interests regarding volunteering, which will then be used to when placing volunteers with students. RSVP/Partner agency staff will work together to screen recruited volunteers for compatibility of experience, skill set, demeanor, and ability as well as best fit with instructors and students. To ensure high quality, safe placement, RSVP requires volunteers to submit and successfully pass background checks (OTIS, ICHAT and NSOPW); additionally, partner agencies typically require an application process and may additionally conduct a FBI level fingerprint check. Volunteer/student interactions will be monitored

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by partner agency staff and conducted in high visibility settings (unless prohibitive to the learning process). RSVP will develop high quality assignments by conducting annual volunteer and partner agency surveys to obtain feedback, to monitor success and satisfaction, and make improvements. Our number priority is to make sure we are developing high quality RSVP assignments so our volunteers can share their experiences, abilities, and skills which will improve our communities and themselves through service in their assignment. Infrastructure: Trained full and part-time staff volunteers, computers, internet, email, data collection/reporting software, phones, fax, partner agencies, volunteers, and sponsor.

¿ Your plan and infrastructure to ensure RSVP volunteers receive training needed to be highly effective means to address the identified community need(s) in both the Primary Focus Area and in Other Focus Areas or Capacity Building.

Training will be provided on an initial and ongoing basis as needed by both RSVP/Sponsor staff and partner agencies. Training topics may vary by placement location and include, but are not limited to: cultural sensitivity, best practices, developing a rapport, how to de-escalate a volatile situation, trip and fall hazards, maximizing your shopping dollars, reporting time, reporting number of unduplicated clients, understanding performance measures and your impact as a volunteer, and other job-specific volunteer training as provided by partner agencies. These trainings and others provide the volunteers serving in Primary and Other Focus Areas to be well prepared and focused on a high quality, knowledgeable support, and accurately recording/reporting data and time. Sign in sheets will be used to document type of training and volunteer participation. Infrastructure: Trained full and part-time staff, computers, internet, email, data collection/reporting software, phones, fax, speaker¿s bureau, partner agencies, sponsor, and volunteers.

¿ The demographics of the community served and plans to recruit a volunteer pool reflective of the communities served. These could possibly include:

o Individuals of all races, ethnicities, sexual orientation, and degrees of English language proficiency.

-- Persons under 5 yrs. at 7%; under 18 yrs. at 25.4%; and under 65 yrs. and over at 11.9%.

-- Female persons are estimated at 50.9%. The population of older adults in Kent County is more than 100,000. Population of Kent County Older Adults 2000-2011: age 60+ increased by 31%; age 85+

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increased 53 % while the overall population of Kent County grew only 5% in the same time period (2000-2011). In 2020, 20% of the County will be age 60+; in 2030, 25% of population will be 60+.

-- Racial makeup of the county: White, 75.3%; Black/African American, 10.3%; Hispanic/Latino, 10.0%; Asian, 2.6%; American Indian/Alaska Native, 0.7%; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, 0.1%; and persons of two or more races, 2.7%.

RSVP is committed to a discrimination-free volunteer recruitment process. RSVP is partnered with local agencies that directly work with the disabled and veteran populations. All agencies partnering with RSVP have documented their commitment to providing a safe, accommodating, and accessible environment in which to place volunteers. Notice of volunteer opportunities and partnering agencies are provided on an ongoing basis to all partnering agencies via newsletter, email, phone, and online resources. RSVP recruitment efforts include participation in local volunteer and community resource events, public speaking engagements at local agencies, retirement and housing communities, and postings on online resources. New recruitment strategies and placement opportunities have been developed that purposefully link veterans and disabled to serve as K-12 education mentors and tutors.

o Veterans and military family members as RSVP volunteers.

-- Number of veterans in Kent County (2008-2012 Census) is 34,719, according to 2013 Census estimates.

-- Number of RSVP veterans serving as volunteers is 9, and with the new recruitment strategies is expected to increase.

Our current RSVP application reflects the volunteer's veteran status. Additionally, ongoing contact with our current volunteer base will be conducted to update applications and gain required information as needed.

o RSVP volunteers with disabilities, including individuals with age-related disabilities.

-- According to the 2000 Census, the number of Kent-County's non-institutionalized population ages 5 to 20 with a disability is 12,738; ages 21 to 64 is 51,305; and 65 years and over is 21,261.

-- Number of RSVP volunteers who self-reported being disabled is zero.

We believe disabled status is significantly underreported. We continue to strategize recruitment and placement of the disabled of our community, and will reach out to Disability Advocates of Kent

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County and other area agencies that serve the disabled population. When the process of updating applications is finished, we anticipate the possibility of seeing the number of disabled RSVP volunteers with placements increase.

¿ Your plan and infrastructure to retain and recognize RSVP volunteers.

The recognition budget allows for \$7.70 per volunteer up to 1,000 volunteers on an annual basis. At least one recognition event will be held annually by RSVP. RSVP plans periodically conduct on-site recognition of volunteers where feasible. The MOU details partner agencies¿ responsibility to provide for volunteer recognition. A volunteer satisfaction survey, conducted on an annual basis, specifically asks volunteers whether or not they are recognized at their agencies, and if so, in what manner are they recognized. Retention: Volunteers are surveyed at intake as to their interests. Interests are noted in our database for matching to current or new volunteer opportunities. New, innovative, and creative volunteer opportunities, targeted towards the younger baby boomers, as well as traditional volunteer activities are being actively sought. New volunteer opportunities are also garnered from current partner agencies, as well as new agency partnerships. Volunteers are alerted to opportunities through newsletter, email, and staff contact via phone. RSVP staff engages in periodic conversation with partner agencies¿ volunteer supervisors and volunteers when they call in to report hours monthly; staff consistently inquires as to their respective satisfaction. An annual volunteer satisfaction survey is conducted to collect any feedback about how to improve the volunteers¿ experience. Offering volunteer recognition both onsite and event-based expresses not only our deep appreciation and respect for their service, but also shows community support through donated volunteer gifts. RSVP staff supports/advocates for volunteers in addressing any conflict or concerns with their volunteer experience. RSVP Orientation encourages volunteers to seek staff support for any concerns they may have. RSVP is actively pursuing additional funding to be able to restore mileage and other incentive reimbursements to further support retention of volunteers. Infrastructure: Trained full and part-time staff volunteers, computers, internet, email, data collection/reporting software, phones, fax, partner agencies, volunteers, and sponsor.

Program Management

SECTION D: PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

In this section, describe specific plans and strategies for overall management of the RSVP.

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- ¿ Your plan and infrastructure ensure management of volunteer stations in compliance with RSVP program regulations, such as preventing or identifying prohibited activities.
- ¿ Your plan and infrastructure to develop and/or oversee volunteer stations to ensure that volunteers are performing their assigned service activities.

This section answers the two bullet points above. Volunteer activities are clearly defined at the inception of an agency¿s partnership through the MOU and its required job descriptions, which are primarily structured after the CNCS Performance Measures. Periodic contact by RSVP staff with partner agencies¿ designated liaisons offers opportunities to gain new job descriptions as well as concerted effort at the time of MOU renewal. As program regulation changes are received, they are distributed via email to the affected partner agencies. Trained RSVP staff/volunteers perform data entry of volunteer time sheets and station time reports which allows for monthly review of activities to screen out and address any prohibited with both the agency and the volunteer involved. Volunteers are given an overview of disallowed activities at the time of enrollment in RSVP. Each volunteer receives a description of any job to which they are assigned, and if necessary, is also verbally covered with the volunteer at the time it is first assigned, and any time thereafter that the description/duties change. If a prohibited activity is identified, RSVP staff will immediately contact the partner agency and the volunteer to review the appropriate rules/regulations with them.

Infrastructure: Trained full and part-time staff volunteers, computers, internet, email, data collection/reporting software, phones, fax, partner agencies, volunteers, and sponsor.

- ¿ Your plan and infrastructure to meet changing community needs, to include minimizing disruption to current volunteers as applicable and/or graduating stations as necessary.

Those volunteers currently serving with activities that do not fit into the Primary Focus Area, Other Focus Areas, or the Community Priority Measure will be assessed for their fit with other RSVP funders' focus areas. Only those volunteers with activities that do not align with any RSVP funders' focus will be graduated. The partner agencies at which these volunteers serve will be informed of the volunteer¿s graduated status. RSVP and the partner agency will develop a collaborative plan to inform the volunteer and to provide recognition for their RSVP service. The volunteer may continue to serve at that agency without interruption, or may choose to add a placement that aligns with one or more of RSVP funder focus areas. Stations with activities that do not align with any RSVP funders' focus

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will be graduated with a certificate in appreciation of their partnership. Additionally, stations that have shown less than 84 hours of service requested/received for a period of 1 year will be contacted to determine if RSVP can assist in increasing their service capacity or if graduation is needed. Thereafter, if said station shows little or no improvement, it will be graduated. Active is defined as serving and reporting an average of 2 hours or more per week consistently, with allowance for snow-birding in the winter and sand-birding in the summer. Active also includes the requirement that volunteers and/or partner agencies regularly report their hours to RSVP and are in good standing with all other requirements as per the MOU.

¿ Your organization¿s track record in the Primary Focus Area, to include, if applicable, measuring performance in the Primary Focus Area.

RSVP has a long standing history of impacting in Education. We currently have volunteers mentoring and tutoring at more than 10 community sites.

¿ Your plan and infrastructure to ensure the project is in compliance with RSVP federal regulations to include establishing an Advisory Council, ensuring RSVP volunteers are placed in stations that have signed the required MOU, and ensuring all volunteers are eligible to serve in RSVP.

The RSVP Director is responsible for tracking all RSVP federal regulations and establishing an Advisory Council. The Director is also responsible for updating RSVP staff as to regulation changes. The Director and Sponsor are in regular contact, on an average of once bi-weekly. The Director is responsible for establishing an agency as a new partner and securing the initial MOU job descriptions. The Director oversees and assists Program Coordinator in MOU renewals and updating job descriptions. The Director and Program Coordinator work collaboratively, and if necessary, individually to view/secure a copy of each new volunteer¿s picture ID with proof of age. The background and driving records placed act as a check and balance to the ID, flagging any discrepancies. Infrastructure: Trained full and part-time staff and volunteers, computers, internet, email, data collection/reporting software, phones, fax, partner agencies, volunteers, and sponsor.

Organizational Capability

SECTION E: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

Briefly describe the sponsoring agency¿s capability to operate the RSVP project that you propose with

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respect to:

¿ Your plan and infrastructure to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight (both financial and in-kind) and day-to-day operational support to ensure compliance with RSVP program requirements (statute, regulations, and applicable OMB circulars) and to ensure accountability and efficient and effective use of available resources.

Senior Neighbors utilizes GP Dynamics Financial Software and Management Reporter report write software. Personnel are experienced in the financial management of federal grants to provide accurate, timely, current and complete disclosure of financial information as required by federal regulations and generally accepted accounting standards. The organization submits to an annual audit by an independent auditor, and funder monitors and has been consistently found to be in compliance and timely in reporting. Our records document both the source and use of funds. We complete and monitor the financial data and compare budget to actual figures on a regular basis. Adequate internal controls over cash on hand are maintained and we have written policies and procedures available. Clearly defined staff positions, identification of current staff assigned to the project and how these positions will ensure the accomplishment of program objectives.

The finance department is made up of the Mary Schroeder MPA, Business Director, Randal Byrne, Accountant, and Phanta Young, Accounting Assistant. Phanta Young is a half-time position and processes accounts payable and payroll and maintains the agency's fixed assets inventory. RB maintains the general ledger, prepares various reports to funders and management staff, does bank reconciliations, monitors bank reconciliations prepared by center staff and volunteers, and reconciles agency asset and liability accounts. MS supervises RB, PY, and Sarah Baker and Suzanne Fischer who job share a secretary position. MS is in charge of the fiscal operations of the agency, human resources, and some facilities management. SB and SF assist with human resources and provide telephone and clerical support for all central office staff.

¿ Demonstrates organizational capacity to:

o Develop and implement internal policies and operating procedures to provide governance and manage risk, such as accounting, personnel management, and purchasing.

The organization has a diverse structure in place and manages several programs funded by federal, state, county, local and community support to ensure adequate support facilities, access to supplies, purchasing procedures per regulations, and maintains a staff of 45 employees.

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o Manage capital assets such as facilities, equipment, and supplies.

The organization inventories all fixed assets on an annual basis, and maintains information on useful life and depreciation of assets. Planning includes replacement of equipment and supplies to allow staff assurance of adequate resources to conduct their duties in as efficient a manner as possible.

¿ Demonstrating organizational infrastructure in the areas of robust financial management capacity and systems and past experience managing federal grants.

Financial staff members have a combined experience in non-profit financial management of over 20 years, 10 years of those being responsible for management of federal grants, including experience in preparing for annual single audits. Senior Neighbors utilizes Microsoft GP Dynamics software and train staff on the system at least semi-annually. Senior Neighbors has been funded by Michigan Office of Services to the Aging and Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan for over 25 years, as well as 9 other government agency funders and several foundation funders. MS has been working for the past 10 years managing federal grants, was formerly a Grant Accountant with Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Michigan managing Jobs Education and Training Grants for their WorkFirst program, and has undergone several successful single audits. RB has been working for Senior Neighbors for the past two years and has proven himself invaluable in tracking the detail needed to manage so many diverse funding source requirements.

Other

NA

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

NA