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Executive Summary

Crow Wing County Community Services (a.k.a. Crow Wing Social Services) is a governmental agency located at the county seat of Brainerd, Minnesota. Crow Wing County covers 99 square miles in central Minnesota with a population of 62,500 citizens. Our mission is to promote and protect the health, well-being and self-sufficiency of all residents of Crow Wing County.

According to the 2010 Census data, 13.4% of individuals living in Crow Wing County are in poverty. In the past 5 years hunger has doubled in Minnesota leading to an increase in low birth weight, teen suicide & senior diabetes. In research provided by Feeding America Crow Wing County has 11.4% (or 7,140) individuals who experience food-insecurity, & must rely on charitable emergency food programs to meet their nutritional needs. A Hazard Assessment was completed on July 9th, 2014 using a hazard vulnerability risk assessment tool. The top 4 results of our assessment for Crow Wing County indicated that the highest risks include: 1) Pandemic Influenza, 2) Extreme Cold, 3) Tornado, and 4) Hazmat/Chemical Spill and Bomb Threat (tied). Based on these findings, our volunteer activities will focus in these areas. We will continue our collaboration efforts with our County Emergency Manager and Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. Planning will include development of resources, determining appropriate training, and exercising a plan with the volunteers assigned to both of these stations. The plan will follow the Crow Wing County Lakes Area Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) model.

<http://www.citizencorps.fema.gov/cc/showCert.do?cert&id=63630>

RSVP of Crow Wing County is highly respected as the hub of volunteerism. Since its' inception in 1973 it has successfully empowered thousands of volunteers to provide "Human Service" focused assistance as a cost effective means of meeting critical societal needs such as disaster preparedness activities and helping individuals who experience food-insecurity, & must rely on charitable emergency food programs to meet their nutritional needs. This will be accomplished in collaboration with our 80 non-profit partnership agencies by empowering over 1,000 RSVP volunteers to serve.

Our ability to meet the ever changing societal needs of our vulnerable population is made possible, in part, through the annual funding of \$35,557 from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) along with local support of approximately \$60,000.

Strengthening Communities

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

Located in the heart of Minnesota's lakes and woods areas, Crow Wing County is a resort/retirement community in the mist of tremendous change. With a relatively small population of 62,500 it's important to note that our overall population continues to grow at "twice" the statewide average (9.5%); while those over 65 grew at a rate 50% faster than the state average. The MN Demographer reports the number of senior citizens 65 or older in Crow Wing County is projected to increase by 290% by 2025. Of the 290% increase, we will see a projected 87% increase in the number of seniors 65 and older and a 203% projected increase in the number of seniors 85 or older. The number of people living alone who are under 65 will increase by 32% while those 65 and older will increase 93% by 2030.

According to the 2010 Census data, 13.4% of individuals living in Crow Wing County are in poverty. In the past 5 years hunger has doubled in Minnesota leading to an increase in low birth weight, teen suicide & senior diabetes. In research provided by Feeding America Crow Wing County has 11.4% (or 7,140) individuals who experience food-insecurity, & must rely on charitable emergency food programs to meet their nutritional needs. As a part of a recent Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) grant in collaboration with our local food bank, it was determined that one of our surrounding communities needed to expand their food shelf hours and their days of delivery.

A Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Office of Emergency Preparedness, Hazard Assessment was completed by our sponsoring agency on July 9th, 2014 using a hazard vulnerability risk assessment tool. The top 4 results of our assessment for Crow Wing County indicated that the highest risks include: 1) Pandemic Influenza, 2) Extreme Cold, 3) Tornado, and 4) Hazmat/Chemical Spill and Bomb Threat (tied). Within Crow Wing County, our main disaster response/preparation services are performed by our local chapter of the American Red Cross who currently has 10 individuals capable of being deployed to assist others. This is not adequate for our service area.

-Describe how the service activities in the Primary Focus Area lead to National Performance Measure outputs or outcomes.

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Food Distribution:

RSVP volunteers will assist local food shelves to make emergency food available to clients in need by obtaining additional food donations, gleaning fresh produce from local farmers, sorting donations, stocking shelves, and completing client intake. Additionally, volunteers will write grants and receive cash donations for the purpose of purchasing food from our local food bank thus resulting in more food available for distribution. Hours and availability will be modified to meet the needs identified as a result of surveys performed by SHIP. In addition, healthy food prep education will be implemented at local food shelves where the opportunities exist in collaboration with our local University of Minnesota Extension educator. By helping individuals and families meet their food security needs, they will be able to live healthier, more productive lives.

Disaster Kits:

Through community events, volunteers will guide participants in the process of creating a personalized disaster kit which would include basic items such as food and water, medications, first aide, batteries, radios etc. Volunteers will also disseminate educational information in an effort to prepare citizens in the event of a disaster.

Disaster Outreach:

Through the utilization of Newsletters, PSAs, Tweets, Radio & TV spots, Social Media and Voice Casting, RSVP Volunteers will respond to no less than 2 Emergency Preparedness exercises annually and will be available within minutes should an actual disaster occur. In the event of an immediate need, RSVP Volunteers would be dispatched to provide food and water dissemination, remediation, record keeping, phone staffing, immunizations, traffic control, forms distribution, supply monitoring, greeting, and monitoring of emergency shelter participants etc. RSVP Volunteers' ability to respond to disasters will ultimately result in an increase of residences ability to successfully endure crisis situations while at the same time reducing loss of property.

-Describe your plan and infrastructure to support data collection and ensure National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs are measured, collected, and managed.

Prospective community partners are interviewed personally by the RSVP Director to assure that they meet our strict and high standards and to ensure that we have mutually beneficial goals, as outlined

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in our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and in keeping with CNCS primary focus area. They are also required to complete a written application form. In addition, in-depth research is performed and taken to our Advisory Board for vote and assuming a favorable response or potential toward that end, only then do they make a recommendation to enter into a formal MOU. Final determination rests with the sponsoring agency and the RSVP Director. Responsibilities and expectations are clearly relayed to each community partner upon signing of the MOU, and then on an as needed basis and no less than once per year to all in a written format.

Our collaborating stations are responsible, based on a fully executed MOU, to provide us with relevant data so as to be able to report to CNCS our progress toward defined National Performance Measurement areas. As part of our routine site visits with our 80 human service focused partnership agencies completed by the RSVP Director, internally tracked data is collected in an interview process in conjunction with sharing best practices, appropriate staffing, funding options, numbers served, and whether they are experiencing an increase or decrease in client participation. In an effort to assure outcomes and outputs are accomplished, formal written surveys will be completed by each station, or by the director during a site interview, on an annual basis. The data will be compiled using Microsoft Excel ensuring National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs are measured, collected, and managed.

-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.

RSVP Volunteer Services works closely with our local Veteran's Administration Health Care System as well as our local county Veteran Services office on a daily basis, as they are located in the same building with adjoining offices. RSVP Volunteers provide direct services to veterans as volunteer drivers, escorts, hospice support, friendly visitors, income tax services and more. RSVP Volunteers are routinely called upon to perform services under the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Program. RSVP Volunteers, specifically veterans, are utilized to drive our local VA van to take veterans to and from their medical appointments in both St. Cloud and Brainerd, Minnesota.

Recruitment and Development

-Describe your plan and infrastructure to create high quality volunteer assignments with opportunities such as sharing their experiences, abilities, and skills to improve their communities and themselves

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through service in their communities.

For the past 41 years, RSVP Volunteer Services of Crow Wing County has been a leader in providing high-quality meaningful volunteer opportunities for all their volunteers. We have partnership agreements with 80 human service focused agencies allowing for a large variety of volunteer opportunities. We meet regularly with our partnership agencies, assessing community needs and dispatching volunteers to assist with those needs. We are regularly involved in a number of grassroots efforts to empower volunteers with the appropriate skill set necessary to meet the needs of our community. RSVP volunteers are recruited for positions based on their interest in building new skills, developing their leadership potential and enhancing their own lives. For example, RSVP volunteers have the opportunity to strengthen their communication, public speaking and leadership skills by working with local grocery stores, service clubs and benefactors to promote and obtain necessary cash and food donations in support of emergency food distributions. In addition, RSVP volunteers have the opportunity to develop their leadership and coordination skills by preparing disaster relief kits, assisting with immunizations, and responding to urgent needs within their neighborhoods.

RSVP Volunteer Services has collaborated with our local newspapers that have, since November 2005, provided us with free advertising to promote flexible volunteer assignments meeting the needs of our community and our baby boomer population. This volunteer recruitment effort alone does an amazing job recruiting volunteers, but it is not our only initiative toward that end. We also utilize a quarterly publication entitled "Life Unlimited" which is sent to over 3200 seniors, numerous public speaking events, PSA's on radio, press releases, personalized ID badges and large posters displayed throughout our service area. Regardless of the service position they choose, volunteers are provided the opportunity to reflect on their assignment and provide feedback as to satisfaction, applicability and overall impact in the community through follow-up phone calls, written correspondence and in person site visits with the director.

Statistically, of the 141 RSVP volunteers recruited, placed and actively serving in the past year, only 1 has been terminated because of an inappropriate match, and 1 was terminated because of poor health, thus resulting in a 98.6% satisfaction or retention rate. Additionally, with the assistance of lead volunteers at each station, we have been able to gather input from volunteers which statistically proves that participating in the RSVP program has improved volunteer life satisfaction.

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

All RSVP volunteers recruited, either by referral from the station or at the RSVP office, are provided a personal interview with the RSVP director to discuss the job descriptions of the volunteer opportunities and to assign a mutually beneficial placement. When possible, a personal placement meeting with the RSVP director and the agency lead coordinator is arranged. After placement, there are follow-up calls to assess appropriateness of assignment, phone calls with the volunteer, annual birthday calls and cards along with a "five-star" recognition event to support their efforts.

Each station site lead volunteer/supervisor receives orientation, ongoing training and an annual review during the renewal of their Memorandum of Understanding. During the annual review, additional topics are covered such as safety plans for volunteers, data collection requirements, allowable activities for volunteers, federal requirements and emerging/evolving primary focus areas.

Lead station volunteers and supervisors are required to work with all RSVP volunteers assigned to them to provide specific training necessary for the volunteer assignment. For example, volunteers serving in distribution of emergency food support receive training not only on how to determine the amount of food to distribute, but also training on sensitivity issues such as data privacy and discrimination when dealing with persons who are economically disadvantaged. When necessary, the RSVP director will be asked to intervene and establish a corrective action plan appropriate to the situation.

In addition, volunteers assigned in our disaster focus areas, depending upon the assignment, are assigned to a Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, an Emergency Management Director or the RSVP director for specific supervision. The RSVP Director routinely attends trainings by the local Volunteer Coordinators Association, Minnesota Association of Volunteer Administrators and the Minnesota Senior Corps Association with information being passed on to partnership agencies as deemed appropriate.

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-Describe the demographics of the community served and plans to recruit a volunteer pool reflective of the community served. (Individuals from diverse races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, or degrees of English language proficiency, Veterans and military family members and RSVP volunteers with disabilities.

Crow Wing County is unique in the state of Minnesota, as it has one of the highest Caucasian populations at nearly 97%. Despite this fact, RSVP strives to recruit seniors from other ethnic, cultural backgrounds. RSVP works closely with community organizations who serve a high percentage of culturally diverse individuals in the community. Those agencies include but are not limited to: The Shop, Department Of Veterans Affairs, Lutheran Social Services, Crow Wing County Veterans Services, Central Minnesota Teen Challenge, Crow Wing County Law Enforcement etc.

By working closely with these diverse organizations, we are able to connect RSVP Volunteers with this population while at the same time gleaning new volunteers of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. In addition, within a small portion of the southeast section of our service area, we have a Native American population of which RSVP volunteers actively serve with emergency food and disaster services, while at the same time displaying posters, recruitment information and registration forms for those seeking to be more actively involved in the community as volunteers.

-Describe your plan and infrastructure to retain and recognize the RSVP volunteers.

In order to build a strong and effective corps of volunteers, the RSVP Director must take a tremendous amount of time getting to know ALL our RSV's personally. The RSVP program must keep detailed and accurate paper/electronic files on each volunteer wherein they are able to keep track of them as a volunteer and as a person regardless of their economic or social background. In other words, besides the normal statistical data, the RSVP program records personal information such as their like of cat's verses dogs, their hidden talents, their favorite travel destinations, their home town, their family composition etc. This not because we want to be "nosey" but rather so that correspondence, such as birthday cards, letters of appreciation, personal calls, handshakes at our "five star" recognition banquet, station site visits, condolences letters, etc, can done on a more personal level. This type of symbiotic relationship is crucial to building a corps of volunteers, recruiting new volunteers, retaining volunteers and recognizing our volunteers. It moves the volunteer from a somewhat cold and distant

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statistic to a close warm member of a team/family. Wherein they, as an individual, as well as their efforts as a volunteer are recognized, nurtured, and valued. It takes more than just paper and computers to build this type of relationship with our volunteers; it takes time, it takes organization, but most of all it takes a great deal of passion on behalf of our sponsor, the RSVP director and support staff.

When it comes to empowering the "Boomers" within our communities, the RSVP program has taken a bold step to reach them through their recently launched "Voice Casting" technology system which allows us to contact one or all of our RSV's iPhone, text or e-mail within seconds because of a urgent need or disaster. The phrase... "Once bitten -- twice shy" could very easily be the Boomers motto when it comes to volunteering. Many of them have experienced firsthand volunteering for what they thought was a one-time project only to find out they are committed for life. The only way that ANY RSVP program will be able to get their attention is to build a component of their respective programs to meet "one time urgent" needs. "Voice Casting" is that component that will get boomers to the table again and we predict, leads to even greater commitments down the road.

Program Management

-Describe your plan and infrastructure to ensure management of volunteer stations in compliance with RSVP program regulations, such as preventing or identifying prohibited activities.

RSVP stations are required to sign an annual Partnership Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and to provide documentation as to their nonprofit status and eligibility to be an agency for RSVP volunteers. A written job description is obtained and used to determine the appropriateness and impact of volunteer assignments and is kept on file in the RSVP office. The utilization of job descriptions and volunteer opportunity classification listings in our local newspapers are two of the methods we use to identify prohibited activities prior to volunteer assignments.

The RSVP director meets with each station on a regular basis and no less than once per year to review the MOU's, review job descriptions, discuss and perform volunteer safety checks, supervision, recognition and to provide an overall opportunity for feedback and general support of volunteers at their site. The MOU's that they sign contains information relating to prohibited activities and by executing this agreement the agency thus agrees to abide by all the items therein. In addition, during these ongoing site visits, performance measurement data is collected and discussed along with

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information as to the impact RSV's are making in the community and in alignment with primary focus areas established by CNCS.

New station volunteer leaders/coordinators receive individual orientation by the RSVP director along with policies, regulations and ongoing technical support to existing managers as needed. They are also encouraged to participate in our local Crow Wing County Volunteer Coordinator Association monthly meetings, wherein they will be able to receive the most up-to-date volunteer management information by networking with other RSVP stations.

- Describe your plan and infrastructure to develop and/or oversee volunteer stations to ensure that volunteers are performing their assigned service activities.

As a requirement of the fully executed Memorandums of Understanding which are renewed annually, stations are required to provide statistical data on a monthly, bimonthly, semiannual or annual basis detailing the types of service volunteers provided, to whom and how many individuals. This information is derived from a combination of individual and/or station surveys (some developed by the stations and some developed by RSVP), internal record-keeping, ongoing verbal feedback from staff, volunteers, and stations, along with monthly feedback from Advisory Board and area volunteer coordinator meetings. The results are then compared against assigned primary focus areas and job descriptions to determine that we are focusing on established priorities and making a concrete and quantifiable impact in our communities. Ongoing failure to provide this information could result in the termination of the station and the reassignment of RSVP volunteers.

-Describe your plan and infrastructure to meet changing community needs to include minimizing disruption to current volunteers as applicable and/or graduating stations as necessary

RSVP Volunteer Services continues to respond to key community needs as they arise, with a specific focus on national priority areas. RSV's who currently do not serve in priority areas are given the opportunity to be reassigned to one of the priority areas or they will be placed in the Other Community Priority Area. It is our goal to maintain our current level of RSVP volunteers while at the same time increasing volunteers serving in the defined priority areas. When necessary, we will be meeting with stations to explain the changes to the RSVP program and encourage them to find

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volunteer opportunities within their agency which fall into the priority areas. Stations unable or unwilling to re-align their goals and objectives with CNCS priority areas will be graduated.

-Describe your organization's track record in the Primary Focus Area, to include, if applicable, measuring performance in the Primary Focus Area.

The RSVP program is sponsored by Crow Wing County Community Services, a branch of local government charged with the responsibility of administering numerous human service focused programs which align perfectly with the primary focus areas recently established by CNCS. Specifically in regards to the disaster services focus area, the RSVP program will rely on the expertise and guidance of a Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and our Emergency Management Director, both of whom are paid staff with our sponsor and have extensive experience in managing volunteers in disaster focus areas.

RSVP collects organizes and analyzes data provided by our stations in order to demonstrate impact. The RSVP volunteer reporter record-keeping system is used extensively to track volunteers, hours of service and statistical data. Some of the performance measurement surveys are designed by staff with input from the agencies others are designed by agencies themselves such as Lutheran Social Services home delivered meals survey measurement tool. In the area of disaster services, we will be using the established Hazard Vulnerability risk assessment tool.

- Describe your plan and infrastructure to ensure the project is in compliance with the RSVP federal regulations to include establishing an RSVP 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.

Federal Regulations: The RSVP Volunteers Services has been under the sponsorship of Crow Wing County for over 41 years. The program is an outreach effort of Crow Wing County Community Services. By regularly attending all CNCS in services, conferences, webinars, and regional meetings, the RSVP director is always informed of any CNCS regulation changes or modifications to its program, and readily relays this information on to Advisory Board Members station volunteer coordinators/leaders and volunteers as applicable. We use daily e-mail, mail and monthly newsletters and quarterly publications to inform all of our stakeholders of programmatic changes within the

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RSVP program.

Advisory Council: The RSVP Advisory Board is made up of between 10 - 12 volunteers from various economic, cultural and geographic areas within our service area. They are instrumental in guiding our program and providing us with station and volunteer activity that may otherwise not be directly available to the RSVP director.

MOU's: Memorandums of Understanding (Partnership Agreements) are renewed on an annual basis by each of the RSVP stations. Any new regulations or policies established by CNCS are incorporated into the annual MOU. We also utilize the tracking services of the RSVP Reporter program to monitor MOU renewal dates for compliance.

Volunteer Eligibility: Every volunteer seeking to register and partake in the RSVP program must complete an RSVP Registration Form which asks for their full name, address, birthdate and driver's license number, in addition to many other relevant data elements necessary to determine program eligibility.

Organizational Capability

-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 (statutes, regulations, and applicable OMB circulars) and to ensure accountability and efficient and effective use of available resources.

Crow Wing County at large has instituted an evaluation software tool called Trakstar. The expectations of the tool are both employee and supervisor add comments and content as it relates to the goals and metrics identified from the program areas the staff person works. At a minimum, a 6 month and annual review is completed to assure timeliness in adjusting work and identifying any issues related to quality. In addition, the department has implemented a system to solicit customer comments in both written form on a comment card and electronically via email survey. Completed surveys are compiled monthly and reviewed to address issues as well as any positive comments.

All financial transactions are required to go through Gwen Anderson, Health and Social Services Division (HSSD) Manager for approval prior to going the accounting department for processing and

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subsequent forwarding onto our County Commissioners for final approval. All transactions are processed through our sponsor's Integrated Financial System (IFS) where in a receipt which corresponds to a deposit number can be easily tracked according to date, source, check number or cash amount received, who deposited the money and what deposit number it was. Monthly financial reports are provided to sponsoring agency leadership team for review. In addition monthly financial reports are provided to the RSVP Advisory Board for review.

-Clearly defined staff positions, identification of current staff assigned to the project and how these positions will ensure the accomplishment of the program objectives.

For the past 14 years, Mike Koecheler, RSVP Director, has been appointed to provide program management and direct supervision of assigned support staff. The Clerk-Typist/Program Assistant support is provided by a pool of staff from the department. The RSVP program is able to draw from this pool, specific individuals to meet its administrative support needs, thus allowing the program the opportunity to maximize individual resources and expertise. Angie Dziedzic has been charged with the responsibility of posting hours, and request for mileage reimbursements. Colleen Jackson, is the Accounting line worker who provides day-to-day receipting of income/expenses. Deb Ellis, as the Accounting Supervisor of the Community Services Department provides fiscal management. Sherry Hutchins, Administrative Coordinator provides support services including but not limited to our quarterly publication, website, scheduling & coordinating ongoing meetings and other administrative services. Gwen Anderson, HSSD Manager provides day to day supervision and direction of the program. Kara Terry, Community Services Director, provides overall direction for the RSVP program. All support staff provided by our sponsoring agency are exclusive of the RSVP budget.

Through daily, weekly and monthly communications, the entire staff works together as a team to guarantee we are meeting the needs of the community, our volunteers and working toward our defined performance measurement outcomes.

-Demonstrates organizational capacity to: Develop and implement internal policies and operating procedures to provide governance and manage risk, such as accounting, personnel management, and purchasing. Manage capital assets such as facilities, equipment, and supplies.

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With the organizational changes in the past 2 years, it was identified that the RSVP program had been functioning more as an entity within itself. With programmatic and budgetary streamlining the RSVP program now has deeper staff capacity to support facility, equipment, supplies, purchasing and personnel management support which is executed and supported organizationally in both the HSSD and Customer Service Division (CSD). Crow Wing County Community Services is now far less of a sponsoring agency and more a supportive structure for the RSVP program. An example of this which is reflected in the budget is volunteer insurance. In previous years the RSVP volunteers were treated through insurance as a separate entity. Now, the volunteers are covered through the larger Minnesota Counties Insurance Trust (MCIT) which can only be accomplished with recognition that the program is integrated with the department which also resulted in a substantial insurance savings.

The RSVP office space is located in the Crow Wing County Community Services building and is provided free of charge. All equipment purchases such as computers, software and standard office equipment are included on the upgrade rotation schedule of our sponsoring agency. Equipment is labeled, tracked and kept on file in the Auditor's office. Typical office supplies are provided by our sponsoring agency.

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

As a County Agency charged with the responsibility of administering multimillion dollar government programs within our geographic boundaries, Crow Wing County Community Services has extensive past, as well as current experience in the managing of all types of grants including but not limited to Federal Grants as evidenced by years of successful audits. There are monthly reports run to assess where expenses and revenues are at in terms of comparing to budget projections. The sponsoring agency has been awarded multiple federal, state and local grants for various program areas on an annual basis. One federally funded program passed through the Minnesota Department of Health is the Public Health Emergency Preparedness program (PHEP). This grant is also managed under the HSSD so by linking the efforts within that grant along with the volunteer efforts in this grant will allow us to advance our community-wide efforts overall. Monthly meetings with the accounting supervisor, Deb Ellis, the Crow Wing County Emergency Manager, John Bowen, PHEP Coordinator, currently being filled, RSVP Director, Mike Koecheler, Administrative Coordinator, Sherry Hutchins

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and HSSD Manager, Gwen Anderson gives us the opportunity to assess progress on the activities, budget management and other opportunities to collaborate or identify areas of duplication.

Other

Not applicable at this time

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

Not Applicable