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Executive Summary

Executive Summary:

New Mexico is located in the southwestern part of the United States. Valencia County, consisting of Los Lunas, Belen, Rio Communities and 12 primarily rural communities, is situated in the central part of the state. In 2010- 2012, Valencia County was home to 77,000 individuals - 26% were 18 and younger and 14% were 65 years and older. Valencia County is struggling with: hunger/poverty issues (37% of children under 18, and 19% of residents 65 and older were living in poverty); isolation of disabled and elderly individuals (24% of residents lived alone); illiteracy (in 2012-2013, only 45% of Belén students and only 50% of Los Lunas students were proficient or above in 4th grade reading); and lack of support for the 6,886 veterans³ and their families.

The Mid-Rio Grande Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) has been sponsored by the City of Belén, in Valencia County, since 1990. In 2015-2016, the Primary Focus Areas for the 169 volunteers will be: increasing food security to children, older adults, persons with disabilities, and families; tutoring children during the school year, afterschool and summer break in order to improve literacy skills; providing companionship and transportation assistance to older persons and persons with disabilities and respite to their caregivers; providing support to veterans; maintaining the environment; and meeting additional community needs.

The CNCS federal investment of \$32,436 will be supplemented by \$32,436 from local government, and \$16,000 from state government.

Strengthening Communities

PART II - SECTION B. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

Community Description and Need

Valencia County, located in central New Mexico, consists of Los Lunas, the county seat; the cities of Belén and Rio Communities; and 12 additional communities that are primarily rural and agricultural in nature. Hiking in the Cibola National Forest or the Manzano Wilderness, a hot air balloon rally, a 220 year old church celebration, many other community events, great weather, low cost of living, peace and quiet, and old-fashioned values such as neighbors helping neighbors; are the greatest attractions to Valencia County. Although there are not many opportunities for employment in these communities, many families have chosen to make Valencia County their home. Some families have resided in these communities for several centuries, possibly since the 17th century. "In 2010 - 2012, Valencia County, New Mexico had a total population of 77,000 . . . Twenty-six percent (26%) of the

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population was under 18 years and 14 percent was 65 years and older."

Although the communities in Valencia County are idyllic in a sense, they, like many small rural communities, are struggling with hunger and poverty issues, isolation of disabled and elderly individuals; poor literacy proficiency scores and graduation rates, lack of support for veterans and their families, and insufficient manpower in non-profit and civic organizations to meet the many needs of the residents and visitors.

In 2010-2012, 24% of Valencia County residents were living in poverty; compared to 21% in New Mexico and 16% in the United States. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of Valencia County children were under 18 (compared to 30% in New Mexico, and 22% in the United States); and 19% were 65 and older (compared to 12% of New Mexicans and 9% of United States residents). "Seventeen percent of [Valencia County] households had income below \$15,000 a year."

Due to the rural nature of several communities in Valencia County, many individuals who have chosen to age in place find themselves isolated and unable to access resources. The Valencia County Older Americans Program maintains five (5) senior centers located throughout the county that provide congregate and home-delivered meals, transportation, housekeeping services, socialization, educational and recreational activities. Although there are some paid staff members at the centers, they are dependent on volunteers to help deliver the services.

"Experts estimate that nearly 40 percent of U.S. 4th graders do not achieve basic levels of reading proficiency." Among the 50 states in the nation, New Mexico ranks 50th - dead last - in 4th grade reading proficiency. Belén Consolidated Schools and Los Lunas Public Schools are the primary providers of public school education in Valencia County. According to New Mexico Voices for Kids, in 2012-2013, only forty-five percent (45%) of students enrolled in Belén Consolidated Schools and 50% enrolled in Los Lunas Public Schools, were proficient or above in 4th grade reading.

There are "170,699 veterans residing in New Mexico; 69,884 are between the ages of 65 and 85+. In 2010-2012, 6,886 veterans made their home in Valencia County; 9 eighteen percent (18%) were 65 and older." In order to receive medical care or chronic conditions, veterans often find themselves having to leave their communities to stay for extended periods of time at the New Mexico Veterans Administration (NMVA) Hospital in Albuquerque; resulting in the loss of social ties with their families and communities.

With only 2 staff members and 7 city parks to maintain, the Parks and Recreation Department in Valencia County are also quite dependent on volunteers to assist them in maintaining the tenuous ecosystem in the parks, given the semi-arid climate in New Mexico.

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In 2015-2016, the Mid-Rio Grande Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) will concentrate their efforts in the following Primary Focus Areas: Education/K-12 Success; Healthy Futures/Aging in Place/Companionship, Caregiver Respite, Transportation; Healthy Futures/Obesity & Food; Veterans and Military Families Served; Environmental Stewardship; and Other Community Priorities.

Focus Area: Education, Objective: K-12 Success

Belén Consolidated Schools and Los Lunas Public Schools are the primary providers of public school education in Valencia County. "The total school enrollment in Valencia County, New Mexico was 21,000 in 2010-2012; [and of these] . . . elementary or high school enrollment was [estimated at] 13,000." According to New Mexico Voices for Kids, in 2012-2013, only forty-five percent (45%) of students enrolled in Belén Consolidated Schools and 50% enrolled in Los Lunas Public Schools, were proficient or above in 4th grade reading. In 2011-2012, only 58% of economically disadvantaged students and 60% of English language learners graduated from high school in 2011-2012 from Belén Consolidated Schools; and Los Lunas Public Schools graduated only 67% of economically disadvantaged students and 65% of English language learners. In order to address the literacy and graduation rates of students in Valencia County, three (3) RSVP volunteers (Inputs), working in 3 elementary schools, will assist a total of 44 students in grades 1- 5 (Targets). The volunteers will work with the students on a one-on-one or small group basis, 2-3 days/week, for 3 - 4 hours each day. They will be assisted in developing language/ literacy skills through the use of games involving phonics and decoding, and reading and writing (Service Activities).

Focus Area: Education, Objective: K-12 Success/Tutoring-Other

During the school year, 2 volunteers (Inputs) will meet with 14 children (Targets) at the library, after school, and assist them 3 days a week, 3-4 hours per day, with their homework (Service Activities). According to Principal Leadership, Student Services, "after-school. . . programs supplement academics outside the regular school day and are associated with improved scores on standardized tests."

"While summer is traditionally a time of fun and relaxation, it's also when students suffer the greatest loss in learning and academic skills. This has a negative effect on [a] child's ability to perform to their potential at the start of the following school year.." Should the children not receive the summer tutoring by the RSVP volunteers, it will result in the "loss of 2-3 months of reading skills, [requiring teachers to] spend between four and six weeks reteaching material that students forget

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during the summer". The two (2) RSVP volunteers (Inputs) that tutor children after school, will tutor 14 children, Headstart through 4th grade (Targets), 3 days/week, 2 hours/day, during the summer months, at the public library, in order to ensure that they do not lose ground in their literacy skills (Service Activities).

Attendance logs will capture Output data for all tutoring activities. School-based testing instruments will be utilized by the teaching staff at the beginning, mid-year and at the end of the school year to determine progress in literacy skills. Standardized pre/post tests administered by the schools, will provide Outcome results. Ninety percent (95%) of the students that receive tutoring during the school year, after school and the summer will improve their academic performance in literacy.

Focus Areas: Healthy Futures, Objective: Aging in Place, Homebound/Companionship

"Hospice care is end-of-life care. A team of health care professionals and volunteers provide . . . medical, psychological, and spiritual support. The goal of the care is to help people who are dying have peace, comfort, and dignity." There is one hospice care agency in Valencia County. Ten (10) staff members serve approximately 130 families a year. In 2015-2016, six (6) RSVP volunteers (Inputs) will provide companionship to ten (10) older adults and individuals with disabilities receiving services through the local hospice program (Targets). The RSVP volunteers will visit with the persons served 2-3 hours per day/2-3 days a week, to share stories/ information about community activities, read to the persons served, and allow the persons served to do life reviews/share memories, etc. (Service Activities). An annual survey to determine satisfaction will be administered by RSVP, to the persons served/their caregivers. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the older adults and individuals with disabilities served will report having increased social ties/perceived social support.

Focus Areas: Healthy Futures, Objective: Aging in Place, Caregiver Respite/Companionship

Nursing homes, or "skilled nursing facilities", offer a residence for persons who require 24 hour nursing and custodial care because they can no longer perform several of their activities of daily living. Physical, occupational, and other rehabilitative therapies are typically provided, as well as social and recreational activities. There is one nursing home in Valencia County. In 2013, 101 of the 120 beds were occupied. Although there has been an overall decrease in the number of nursing home residents, states with a higher proportion of older people below the federal poverty level [and those with] high levels of older people living in rural areas had greater numbers of nursing home residents. "In 2010-2012, 14% of Valencia County residents were 65 years and older, and of these, 19% were

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living in poverty, compared to 12% of New Mexicans and 9% of United States residents." Although round the clock care is provided in the nursing home, they are often short-staffed, so many family members continue to visit their loved ones daily and assist with their care. Even though the family caregiver no longer needs to provide 24-hour care, the stress of caring for a loved one in a nursing home still remains for many. By providing companionship to the residents, family caregivers receive badly needed respite. "Research shows that if we provide support services to caregivers, stress levels will be reduced, the caregiving will be a more positive experience, and more families will remain the backbone of long-term care". Seven (Inputs) RSVP volunteers (including the 6 providing companionship via the hospice program) will visit with 10 older adults and individuals with disabilities receiving services at the local nursing home (Targets), 2-3 hours per day/2-3 days a week, to share stories/ information about community activities, read to the persons served, and allow the persons served to do life reviews/share memories, etc. (Service Activities). An annual survey to determine satisfaction will be administered by RSVP, to the persons served/their caregivers. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the older adults and individuals with disabilities served, will report having increased social ties/perceived social support.

Typically, persons in nursing homes and those receiving hospice services and their caregivers, especially in rural areas, are quite isolated; so the support offered by the volunteers has a tremendous impact on these families. Being able to age in place - albeit in a local nursing home, or live out their last few days at home with hospice, allows individuals to remain close to their families and community.

Focus Areas: Healthy Futures, Objective: Aging in Place, Transportation

Getting to doctor's appointments, shopping and running other errands can be difficult for anyone without personal transportation, but it is even more difficult for older persons and persons with disabilities. There are three entities that provide transportation services to older persons and persons with disabilities in Valencia County; these being: the Valencia County Older Americans Program Transportation Services, the Rio Metro Valencia Dial-a-Ride Program, and the Telephone Tree Home Care and Transportation Program. Via the Telephone Tree Home Care and Transportation Program, one (1) RSVP volunteer (Inputs) will transport two (2) older persons and/or persons with disabilities (Targets), 5 days/week, 5 hours per day, to medical and other types of appointments, and to conduct their shopping and other errands (Service Activities). Provision of this service will allow Valencia County residents to live independently and age in place in their communities. Without the service,

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these individuals would be unable to obtain needed medical care, nutritious food and other necessities, possibly resulting in self-neglect and premature institutionalization. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the older adults and individuals with disabilities receiving transportation and companionship will report having increased social ties/perceived social support. An annual satisfaction survey will be administered by RSVP, to the person(s) served.

Focus Areas: Healthy Futures, Objective: Obesity & Food

Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap 2014 reported that the food insecurity rate in Valencia County, in 2012, was 15.4%. In a 2010 survey conducted by the New Mexico Association of Food Banks, "54% of surveyed clients report[ed] having to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities, [and] 45% had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care." Studies have shown that children who live in poverty are more likely to suffer from food insecurity and homelessness, and have poor physical and mental health; thus negatively affecting their overall growth and development, and seriously reducing their academic achievements. Studies have also shown that older persons are among the most physically vulnerable to hunger. Nutritional needs and medical conditions change as individuals age, thus, hunger and the lack of access to nutritious foods compromises their health; oftentimes, deteriorating their mental and physical well-being. Chronic illnesses worsen with hunger and leaves seniors at risk for increased long-term care and hospitalization.

In 2015-2016, eighty-six (86) RSVP volunteers (Inputs) will sort, pack and distribute dried goods and perishables; weekend back packs; and home-delivered meals via the senior centers (Service Activities) to approximately 870 individuals/ families (Targets) per month, at various food distribution sites, including: Belén Food Pantry (28 volunteers, 3 days a week/5 hours per day, to 260 individuals), 5 of the 28 will also prepare weekend backpacks for 60 low-income children, once a week, 4 hours/day; Echo Food Distribution (3 volunteer, 1 day/month, 5 hours/day, 200 families); Move That Food Through Valencia County (3 volunteers, 4 hours/day, 2 days/week, 150 individuals); St. Phillip's Church (16 volunteers, 1 day/week, 6 hours/day, 50 families/month, 300/year); St. Vincent's Restore (27 volunteers, 1 day/week, 3 hours/day, 60 families/month); and nine (9) volunteers will prepare/pack 90 Meals on Wheels, scheduled for daily delivery by Belen Senior Center staff, to homebound older persons and persons with disabilities. They will do so 5 days a week, 4 hours /day. Without the assistance of the volunteers, non-profit and community organizations would be unable to address the existing and ever-growing food insecurity in Valencia County. It is anticipated that 90%

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of persons receiving food assistance will report an increase in food security for themselves and their children (Outcome). Volunteer station service and satisfaction data will be used as the Outcome instruments.

Focus Area: Veterans and Military Families, Objective: Veterans and Military Families Served

The United States honors veterans on Memorial Day, Armed Forces Day, and Pearl Harbor Day. New Mexico pays tribute to veterans on those days as well, and on Military and Veterans' Day and Vietnam Veteran's Day during the state legislative sessions. The New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services not only provides benefits information and assistance to veterans and their families, it also sponsors a variety of veteran-related conferences, job training and business development opportunities, and memorial celebrations around the state. All of these community supports are very beneficial for veterans still residing in their communities, but there are many disabled and elderly veterans from Valencia County and other parts of New Mexico, who find themselves hospitalized at places like the New Mexico Veterans' Administration (NMVA) Hospital in Albuquerque. In order to receive medical treatment these men and women have had to leave home, becoming somewhat isolated as they have lost social ties with their communities.

There are "170,699 veterans residing in New Mexico; 69,884 are between the ages of 65 and 85+. In 2010-2012, 6,886 veterans made their home in Valencia County; 25.18 percent (18%) were 65 and older." Once a month, the Mid-Rio Grande RSVP volunteers go to the hospital to visit and share local news with in-patient veterans, and distribute handmade lap blankets to them. Volunteers at the Del Rio Project Center make these lap blankets. The volunteers devote 2 days per week working on the lap blankets (for a total of 550 hours/month). In 2012-2013, it is estimated that 100 lap blankets were distributed to veterans at the VA Hospital in Albuquerque. In 2015-2016, seven (7) RSVP volunteers (Inputs) will assist with the production of the lap blankets (Service Activities); and once a month, 8 hours per visit, three (3) volunteers (Inputs) will distribute lap blankets and provide companionship (Service Activities) to 100 (total per year) hospitalized veterans (Targets). The Volunteer Time Sheets and a Tracking Log will assist in determining the number of veterans served.

Focus Areas - Environmental Stewardship, Objective: At-Risk Ecosystems

New Mexico, located in the southwestern part of the United States, has an arid to a semi-arid climate, with an "average annual precipitation [that] ranges from less than 10 inches over much of the southern desert and the Rio Grande and San Juan Valleys . . ." Valencia County, located in the Mid-

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Rio Grande Valley, gets approximately 7.8 inches of rain per year, compared to the U.S. average of 37 inches. ". . .86% of the State [of New Mexico is] in severe to exceptional drought. . ." Given the climate in Valencia County, the type of vegetation planted, therefore, needs to be drought resistant. The City of Belén has seven city parks. In order to provide residents with clean, comfortable parks, yet remain cognizant of the limited water supply, the Parks and Recreation Department strives to plant and maintain xeriscaping vegetation. Once a month, 8 RSVP volunteers (Inputs) will assist 2 department staff members, to pick up dead foliage, plant new shrubs and flowers; and water the foliage two days a week (Service Activities). In 2015-2016, the RSVP volunteers will provide approximately 239 hours of service improving the city park. Information on the number of acres improved by the RSVP volunteers, obtained from the Parks and Recreation Department, will be used to report the required Output data for the grant.

Focus Area - Other Community Priorities, Objective: Unmet local & state needs

Non-profit and other community organizations attempting to meet the varied needs of the residents and visitors in Valencia County are always in need of volunteer assistance as there are never sufficient paid positions available. Ten(10) RSVP volunteers (Inputs) will continue their placements at the: City of Belen Chamber of Commerce and the Harvey House Museum. They will answer phones and direct individuals to needed resources, act as docents, assist with data entry, and prepare tax documents (Service Activities). It is expected that a total of 6600 volunteer hours will be provided in 2015-2016.

Five (5) senior centers (Belén, Bosque Farms, Del Rio, Meadow Lake, and Los Lunas) in Valencia County serve as RSVP volunteer stations. In 2013, the centers served 58,000 congregate meals and 73,000 Meals on Wheels. In 2015-2016, forty-one (41) volunteers (Inputs) will continue to assist older persons and persons with disabilities, 5 days a week, 4-6 hours per day. At the center, the volunteers will serve food and carry trays and drinks to seniors unable to serve themselves; wrap the silverware; and clean up after each meal. While serving and interacting with the individuals partaking of the meals, the volunteers will provide companionship and support as well. Service numbers taken from the volunteers' quarterly time sheets and data submitted by the volunteer stations will be utilized to determine if the anticipated Outputs are met.

Data Collection

In an effort to ensure that data for the National Performance Measures' Outputs and Outcomes is

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measured, collected, managed, and reported quarterly and annually to the national and state Corporation for National and Community Service offices, and the New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department, the Program Director maintains the following information in the Volunteer Reporter Data Program: the number of active volunteers and number of children/persons/caregivers served; service dates, hours and activities performed; information gathered from first-hand observations during quarterly/annual visits to volunteer stations; feedback from volunteers during office and site visits; feedback from persons served, their caregivers/families, and contact persons at volunteer stations via face-to-face and phone contacts, and annual satisfaction surveys - regarding identified needs being met, status of the relationship between the volunteer and the children/persons /caregivers served, a quarterly review (and revision, if necessary) of the Memorandum of Understanding (and Letter of Agreement, where applicable) with each volunteer station and the assigned volunteers, and results from annual assessments conducted by the Program Director and the Advisory Board. Service numbers and satisfaction data, taken from the volunteers' quarterly time sheets, data submitted by the volunteer stations, and annual satisfaction surveys administered by RSVP, and academic testing results, will be utilized to determine if the anticipated Outputs and Outcomes are met.

Recruitment and Development

PART II - SECTION C. RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Infrastructure to Develop High Quality Volunteer Assignments

Since its inception, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) has developed its roster of volunteer stations by utilizing targeted recruitment methods with the goal of ensuring placements that not only address unmet community needs but provide volunteers meaningful experiences as well.

Community organizations that are approached as possible volunteer stations are those that are attempting to address changing community needs due to demographic fluctuations as identified in the annual community needs survey conducted by the County Commissioners; and organizations that are in need of specialized volunteers and can provide unique placements that will best utilize the expertise, skills and interests of new volunteers. A community organization may also be recruited as a volunteer station because it already utilizes non-RSVP volunteers and they wish to be approved as an official volunteer station and would like to have the current volunteers registered with RSVP.

In order to determine if an organization will be an appropriate and successful volunteer station, face-to-face visits are conducted with potential volunteer stations, wherein, a program description is provided; and a discussion is held regarding their needs, including: the number and type of volunteers

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desired, the number of hours/days per week volunteers are required, the type of clientele volunteers may be serving, their ability to utilize the expertise and skills of the existing volunteers or the need to recruit specialized volunteers; required performance measurement goals; data collection and reporting requirements; training and supervision of volunteers; facility safety procedures; and their ability to meet the needs of disabled volunteers (i.e. handicapped accessibility). If an organization chooses to become a volunteer station and is approved by the RSVP office, a Memorandum of Understanding is developed that outlines the "program requirements, working relationships, and mutual responsibilities [of all parties]".

Potential volunteers either select their volunteer stations on their own, based on their area of interest, proximity to their home, hours\days assistance required; or they request that the RSVP Director assign them to an approved volunteer station. To ensure the availability of appropriate volunteer stations and successful placements, the following information is gleaned from the potential volunteer via a thorough interview: their interests/desires/hobbies, previous life experiences (including careers/employment), skills, language preferences, physical abilities/limitations, and an interest in meeting/establishing a relationship with individuals from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds, and willingness to follow program and volunteer station regulations. Needs/expectations and preferences in terms of service delivery dates/times (for all parties) are clearly identified, program regulations (including limitations) are outlined, and a copy of the RSVP Volunteer Handbook is provided.

RSVP Volunteers' Training Plan

Although RSVP volunteers bring with them a vast amount of experience, knowledge, skills, and wisdom, a variety of training opportunities are made available so as to keep them abreast of current information, and to help them learn new skills or enhance their existing skills. If they are interested, they can attend the Quarterly Aging Network Training sessions and the Conference on Aging sponsored by the New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department. The RSVP volunteers obtain information during health fairs, and other training opportunities offered at the senior centers and at their volunteer stations. Community programs such as the local hospice program, the Human Services Department, the Aging & Long-Term Services Department, the New Mexico Alzheimer's Association, the Department of Veterans' Services, AARP, and the Central New Mexico Community College, provide information on topics, helpful in the provision of service and for their own well-being, such as: working with persons with Alzheimer's and related dementias (and caregiver support programs); hospice and home health care services; accessing food, utility and monetary assistance;

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veterans' benefits; health promotion initiatives related to nutrition, diabetes, arthritis, exercise, etc.; State Health Insurance Assistance Program (health insurance information) and prescription assistance (MedBank); recognizing and reporting adult and child abuse, neglect, and exploitation; legal services, the AARP Driver Safety Program, etc. Volunteers tutoring children can avail themselves of training opportunities offered to school staff that will enhance their knowledge/skills in educating young children.

Recruitment of Potential RSVP Volunteers

Recruitment of potential volunteers and volunteer stations is conducted via exhibit tables at local health fairs and various community and church functions; and via advertisements in local newspapers, church bulletins, and local radio stations. Word of mouth commendations from existing volunteers and recipients of service (individuals, families, volunteer stations) are the most effective recruitment approaches. These recruitment methods have served RSVP well, but as the demographics of the community change, so does the recruitment plan have to change.

Between 2000 and 2010, Valencia County experienced a 44.91% change in the 65 and older age group. The Program Director and Advisory Board will review and update their volunteer recruitment plan so as to ensure that the volunteer pool is reflective of the county's changing demographics. The plan will target recent retirees, including snowbirds that have chosen to make Valencia County their permanent home, some of which are Baby Boomers. "Baby Boomers - the generation of 77 million Americans born between 1946 and 1964..". According to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), "to attract Baby Boomers to volunteering, experts on aging agree that nonprofit groups and others must boldly rethink the types of opportunities they offer - to 're-imagine' roles for older American volunteers that cater to Boomers' skills and desire to make their mark in their own way".

Every effort is made to ensure that the volunteer pool is representative of all races and ethnicities in Valencia County. "In 2010-2012, fifty-nine percent [59%] of the people in Valencia County . . . were Hispanic, [and] thirty-six percent [36%] . . . were White non-Hispanic". There were small pockets of African Americans, American Indians, and Asians in the county. Cultural competency and proficiency in locally spoken languages (i.e. English, Spanish) is ensured in the volunteer pool.

Recruitment of potential volunteers from among the local veterans' organization (i.e. VFW, Vietnam Veterans, National Guard retirees) will be intensified in order to address the growing needs of the Valencia County veteran population.

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In order to be accepted as a volunteer with RSVP, an individual must sign an RSVP Enrollment Form and the Volunteer Handbook Agreement Form; and provide copies of their auto insurance and a valid form of identification (driver's license, green card, MVD Identification Card). The Sex Offender Registry is checked each time a new volunteer is being considered.

Retention and Recognition of RSVP Volunteers

The community leaders and various organizations in the small, rural communities in Valencia County could not address the ever-growing needs of their residents without the assistance of the RSVP volunteers. It is incumbent on the program therefore, to implement a volunteer retention plan that will ensure a stable pool of volunteers. According to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), "1 out of 3 volunteers, who volunteer in one year do not volunteer the next year . . . Volunteer retention is related to the type of organization where a person volunteers and to the activities that the volunteer performs". The groundwork done at the application/interview stages to ensure appropriate placements, that respect, value and properly apply the volunteers' skills, expertise, and interests, ensures retention of the volunteers. For those volunteers that may be waning in their commitments, the program will explore more challenging placements, with the possibility of more service hours, as recommended by CNCS.

The Program Director's open-door practice and a long-standing record of success also entice volunteers to remain with the program. The volunteers receive constant praise for their work, small tokens of appreciation, and an annual recognition event. If they are 60 years and older, they can avail themselves of meals, transportation, and educational and recreational services offered by the senior centers.

Program Management

PART II - SECTION D. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Infrastructure to Ensure Compliance of Volunteer Stations

As stated earlier, thorough interviews with potential volunteer stations are conducted before volunteer stations and placements are approved. Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) clearly outline the responsibilities of the volunteer stations and that of the assigned volunteers. In addition to the MOU, a Letter of Agreement is prepared/provided to the volunteers, volunteer station, and the recipients of companionship and caregiver respite in the nursing home and the hospice program. Clear-cut program policies and procedures in compliance with the federal regulations regarding volunteer stations are in place. The Program Director conducts quarterly and annual site visits to ensure that

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quality services are being delivered within the program guidelines, and to determine if there is a need for a change in placements and/or in the MOU (and Letters of Agreement). The Director maintains ongoing communication with the volunteers and the stations. The information is utilized for reporting to local, state and federal funding sources; and in program planning (i.e. revisions to the recruitment plan, and management of volunteers & volunteer stations).

Changing Community Needs/Minimizing Disruption

As job opportunities increase in the nearby metropolitan community, housing costs continue to be more affordable in Valencia County, and the current population ages in place, the demographics of these communities will continue to change, placing even greater demands on community organizations. Simultaneously, funding for non-profits is dwindling, placing them in a position to be even more dependent on volunteers. Current participants of senior center programs are becoming frailer and will fairly soon require in-home and other support services. Some of the current volunteers are also getting older and experiencing illnesses and disabilities, resulting in their having to disengage from RSVP. Program planning to address changes to the volunteer pool is a continuous process, executed together with the Advisory Board and the City of Belen administration. As stated earlier, recruitment strategies will be implemented to target retired Baby Boomers and new residents (i.e. snowbirds) that can help address the increasing community needs.

The Mid-Rio Grande RSVP makes every effort to reassign current volunteers who are aging in place themselves, and are in need of less stressful volunteer opportunities, but wish to remain active and involved in their communities and with RSVP. Options explored include: a reduction in volunteer hours, adjustments to the volunteer duties, ensuring that the work environment is handicapped accessible, etc. If the current volunteer station cannot accommodate the changing needs of the volunteer, a different placement is explored. If a volunteer - or a volunteer station - chooses to graduate from RSVP, their service is acknowledged with much appreciation via recognition at the annual banquet, thank you letters/tokens of appreciation, an article in the monthly newsletter and/or the local newspaper. Assistance with the transition is provided to the volunteer(s) & volunteer station(s), including notification to the persons served. Recruitment for (an) appropriate substitute RSVP volunteer(s)/volunteer sites is initiated immediately upon notice of upcoming assignment changes. The newly assigned volunteer(s) will be accompanied by the Program Director at the onset of service to ensure a smooth transition. If the volunteers chose to remain with a graduated station, efforts will be made to explore the possibility of placing them in the Community Priorities Focus Area,

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so they can remain with RSVP.

Organizational Track Record Managing Volunteers

The City of Belén, in Valencia County, has successfully sponsored the Mid-Rio Grande Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) since 1990. Since its inception, the Mid-Rio Grande RSVP had success rates of 90-100% in meeting their goals of increasing food security and literacy rates; assisting individuals to age in place and increase their social ties; and meeting other community needs.

Infrastructure to Ensure Program Compliance

The Program Director maintains regular contact with the state Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and the New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department; to obtain the most current related regulations, to request clarifications if needed, and to obtain technical assistance/guidance. The Program Director frequently conducts program reviews (and revises related documentation, if necessary) in order to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations.

Mr. Jay Ruybalid, the City of Belén Manager, supervises the RSVP Director. He will assist the Director with: fiscal oversight, including monitoring expenditures to ensure compliance with the grant budget and with procurement procedures; and will conduct monthly status reviews with the Director to ensure program compliance with the grant scope of work.

The Mid-Rio Grande RSVP has a six-member Advisory Board with varied backgrounds, knowledge and expertise that only serves to strengthen the program. The Board members assist with public relations, recruitment, fundraising strategies, and fiscal and programmatic oversight. They also lend a hand when the office is short-handed - responding to inquiries about the program, guiding volunteers/volunteer stations; assisting with training and recognition activities; program assessments and program planning.

Organizational Capability

PART II - SECTION E. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Infrastructure to Ensure Programmatic and Fiscal Oversight

The current Finance Manager for the City of Belén Finance Department is Roseann Peralta. She brings with her 5 years of experience in fiscal management. She is responsible for fiscal and capital assets (facilities, equipment, supplies) management of all the programs administered by the city, including RSVP. The City Human Resource Department handles all personnel matters. The City has financial and personnel policies and procedures in place that apply to the RSVP Director, Program

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Secretary, Finance Manager, and City Manager. Programmatic oversight is also provided by the City Manager.

Program Personnel

The current Program Director, Ms. Bertha Flores, has successfully managed the Mid-Rio Grande RSVP for the last 5 years. Prior to this, Ms. Flores worked in private industry. Her experience assisting older persons in the community has served her well in her position as RSVP Director. The City Manager, Jay Ruybalid, has worked in senior services for 16 years, ten (10) managing the Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent Programs for the City of Albuquerque. He also served on a national task force to review and update the rules and regulations of the senior volunteer programs. The RSVP Secretary, Ms. Leandra Chavez assists with data entry; responds to telephone inquiries from volunteers, volunteer stations, and potential program participants, and the general public; and assists the Advisory Board and the Program Director with recruitment and recognition activities.

Policies and Operating Procedures

The Mid-Rio Grande Retired Senior Volunteer Program functions under the auspices of the City of Belén; therefore, the program abides by their administrative policies and procedures, including: accounting, purchasing, capital asset management (facilities, equipment, and supplies), and human resources.

Experience Managing Federal Grants

For the year ended June 30, 2013, the City of Belén administered a total of \$717, 884 from the: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Federal Aviation Administration, and the Corporation for National and Community Service. An independent audit and the State Auditor's Office found the city in compliance with their fiscal management of federal funds.

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Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A