

Narratives

Executive Summary

The Story City Senior Citizens (SCSC), Inc. is the administrator of the Story City Senior Center (managing activities and facilities) and the current Sponsor for both Central Iowa RSVP and Central Iowa RSVP North. SCSC, Inc. began as an RSVP grantee in 1973, serving Story County and expanding to serve Marshall County in 2003 (Central Iowa RSVP). More recently (2012), SCSC, Inc. became the sponsor of Central Iowa RSVP North, which operates under a separate grant through the Corporation for National and Community Service.

This summary outlines plans for continued service and sponsorship of Central Iowa RSVP North, an RSVP project that serves two counties (Hamilton and Webster) just north and west of Central Iowa RSVP's service area and represents two former projects that relinquished their RSVP grants in 2011. Story City Senior Citizens, Inc. was awarded state funding in July, 2012 to restore services to this geographic area and was awarded a federal grant through the competition process in September, 2012. Using the experience and skills of Central Iowa RSVP's board and staff members, Central Iowa RSVP North was established.

An estimated 280 RSVP volunteers will serve in a variety of assignments in Hamilton and Webster counties. Central Iowa RSVP North has established high quality assignments over the past 2 years in several service areas but will incorporate Education as its Primary Focus Area beginning in July, 2015. Although Central Iowa RSVP North internally manages two programs that fall under Healthy Futures (BASE Senior Fitness Program) and Economic Opportunity (Winter Weatherization Project), the largest number of volunteers will continue in assignments that address School Readiness and K-12 success. Through a variety of pre-school/school-based and summer literacy assignments that include: Elementary Reading Buddies/Book Worms, Head Start, Literacy Partners Writing Project, we anticipate engaging 220 volunteers in assisting 350 students/children with increased academic performance by the end of the 3-year grant period.

We will continue to engage RSVP volunteers in Hamilton County RSVP BASE (Balance, Agility, Strength, Endurance) Senior Fitness Program. BASE began in July, 2014 and in less than 2 months we have registered 120 participants, offering these senior citizens an opportunity to improve their physical and mental well-being through low-impact fitness instruction by trained RSVP volunteers. In addition, we plan to conduct an annual winter weatherization project in both counties. This project

Narratives

engages RSVP volunteers working alongside other community volunteers to weatherize the homes of low-income individuals/families, frail elderly, veterans, or families of deployed veterans. These services help these residents keep their homes warmer and save on their energy bill during the cold Iowa winter.

The Corporation for National & Community Service federal investment of \$89,500 (annually) will be supplemented by an anticipated \$22,951 in non-federal resources. (Please note that this project has been federally funded for less than 2 years. Therefore, our non-federal share is currently 20.4%).

Strengthening Communities

The target communities for this grant include Fort Dodge and Webster City, Iowa, both county seats. Fort Dodge, population 24,639 (66.4% of Webster County) is a major commercial center for north central and northwest Iowa with manufacturing, mining and retail being the major industries. It is home to the central campus of Iowa Central Community College. Webster City, population 7,877 (51.3% of Hamilton County) is known as 'Boone River Country' with the Boone River meandering along the east side of the city from north to south and is home to several large companies.

Both communities pose significant social and economic challenges that RSVP will work to address through the development and implementation of quality assignments. Both counties are among the highest in the state in percentage of single parent homes (39% in Webster County alone), unemployment (increasing 168% in the past decade), poverty, child abuse and neglect, and families accessing food assistance (increasing 148% in the last decade). In both communities the average household income is significantly lower (25% less) than the state's average. These trends in economics and well-being have created huge needs among the residents and school systems of these communities, providing both a challenge and an opportunity for RSVP to be part of the solution.

There are many paths to success in life, but they all begin with a strong foundation in health, social, emotional skills and cognitive development. It is well documented that the characteristics of poverty (food insecurity, lack of medical care, housing and family instability, parental job loss, to name a few) compromise much of this foundation and certainly has a direct impact on education and student achievement. Brain research tells us that the first 8 years are critical for building the foundation for future learning and emotional development. Unfortunately, by the time they are 8 years old, many children--especially those living in low-income families--have not met the developmental milestones

Narratives

that are essential for future success in school and in life. According to www.dosomething.org, 40% of children living in poverty aren't prepared for primary schooling and by the end of the 4th grade, low-income students are already 2 years behind grade level. By the time they reach the 12th grade they are 4 years behind.

One of the key milestones on the path to success is learning to read in the early grades. As documented in the Casey Foundation's reports *Early Warning: Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters* and *Early Warning Confirmed*, the end of third grade marks the point when children transition from learning to read to using reading to learn other subjects. Children who read proficiently by the end of third grade are more likely to graduate from high school and to be economically successful in adulthood.

Because of the importance for all children to read proficiently by 3rd grade and the negative effect poverty has on academic success, Central Iowa RSVP North has selected Education as our Primary Focus Area. In the Fort Dodge School District, 60% of the students are eligible for free or reduced lunches and in the Webster City School system that percentage is 54. Both the Fort Dodge and Webster City School Districts along with 2 other rural districts have embraced the engagement of RSVP volunteers in helping children reach their academic potential. Through a variety of assignments (Reading Buddies, Bookworms, Literacy Writing Partners Project, Head Start), RSVP volunteers can be part of the solution in closing the gap in reading proficiency rates in 110 children, specifically focusing on helping students from low-income families improve academic performance in literacy.

Reading is just 1 of 4 communication skills that are vital to student success. In addition to developing reading skills, it is important for students to engage in activities that also develop writing, listening, and speaking skills. RSVP volunteers will engage in several educational assignments that help students improve in all areas of communication, including Speak UP! (public speaking course for 5th grade students) and Literacy Partners Writing Project (RSVP volunteers corresponding with elementary students to increase student writing and reading skills).

RSVP will also be engaging volunteers in Head Start Programs in both Hamilton and Webster Counties. According to Iowa Kids Count Data, 20% of children in Webster County live in poverty, increasing 20% since 2007. In Hamilton County, child poverty is at 15.8% and is up a staggering 40%

Narratives

since 2007. Head Start programs serve the social, emotional, nutritional and education needs of preschool children who are from families identified as being at 100% of poverty or less. "Research has shown that low-income, at-risk children typically are behind their peers before they enter kindergarten," states Brenda Spurgeon, an Early Childhood Education Specialist with the Head Start Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) System. "That's why it's so important that Head Start provide quality classroom experiences, assess children and provide individualized support," she says. The participation of volunteers has been an effective way of mobilizing community resources to strengthen Head Start Services. RSVP volunteers will be an important part of that strategy, serving as educational mentors to help prepare children for entrance into and success in Kindergarten.

As these assignments in Education are implemented, RSVP staff will work with educators, and other partners to support data collection and ensure National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs are measured, collected, and managed in the Focus Area of Education. The Director of Central Iowa RSVP North (and Central Iowa RSVP) has been implementing outcomes data collection strategies for 18 years. If needed, RSVP has the resources to provide these partners with the measurement tools needed to collect relevant data that corresponds to the children served by RSVP volunteers (Corporation for National & Community Service Knowledge Network, Iowa Association of RSVP Directors, Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service, etc).

Other Focus Areas that are part of the National Performance Measures are also being addressed through assignments in Healthy Futures and Economic Opportunity. Central Iowa RSVP North's elderly population is significantly higher than the state's average of 14.6%, with Webster County having 17% of its population over 65 and Hamilton County having nearly 25% of its residents over 65. This poses an opportunity for RSVP in terms of volunteer recruitment but also an opportunity to serve this population. Although Education will be our primary focus area, we will still develop and implement assignments in Healthy Futures and Community Priorities that meet the needs of older adults. Examples include: home delivered meals, food pantry assistance or food delivery, winter weatherization services, serving in hospitals/nursing homes, etc. RSVP will implement the same strategies to ensure outcomes are measured and collected (when appropriate) to meet Corporation for National & Community Service reporting requirements.

One of the strengths of RSVP is its ability to adapt programming to address existing and emerging

Narratives

community needs. We will continue to engage volunteers in Community Priority assignments that do not fit 1 of the 6 main focus areas. A report released by the Urban Institute named a lack of human resources as 1 of the top 5 most difficult obstacles facing nonprofit organizations in today's challenging business environment. Uncomplicated, yet time-consuming tasks associated with business operations drain valuable staff time while diverting attention from essential outreach activities. RSVP volunteers will enhance and supplement the services of approximately 28 local public and non-profit organizations in Hamilton and Webster Counties. Assignments include providing clerical assistance for several agencies (answering phones, directing clients, data entry, filing, greeting the public, assembling newsletters and other materials, assisting with annual events, etc.); providing support to the staff, patients, and residents of area nursing homes and hospitals; providing a variety of services to support the staff and clients at area Public Libraries and the Fort Dodge Museum (hosts, greeters, tour guides); regularly staffing a Thrift Store and a Clothes Pantry, helping with sorting and assisting clients in accessing free clothing and household goods; assisting the City of Webster City with keeping parks and trails clear of litter; and assisting and supporting RSVP by providing leadership and helping RSVP staff through their service on the Central Iowa RSVP North Advisory Council.

Central Iowa RSVP North does not engage RSVP volunteers in assignments that are exclusive to Veteran's and Military families through the Veterans and Military Families Focus Area. However, in both Hamilton and Webster Counties, RSVP conducts a winter weatherization project engaging volunteers in providing weatherization services designed to help families and individuals save money on their winter fuel bill. In addition to offering this service to low-income families and frail elderly residents, it is also offered to Veterans and/or families of Veterans who are currently deployed.

Recruitment and Development

Under the leadership of the RSVP Director and SCSC, Inc., Central Iowa RSVP North has been able to implement the same volunteer recruitment and development strategies that have been successful for Central Iowa RSVP (a 40-year project also sponsored by SCSC, Inc.). Over the past 2 years we have used that experience to create an infrastructure within Central Iowa RSVP North that ensures effective processes are in place.

As we began to rebuild an RSVP presence in Hamilton and Webster County, Iowa, SCSC, Inc. (RSVP) engaged community stakeholders in the development of collaborations and programming. Re-establishing RSVP services in 2 counties previously served by RSVP required input from community

Narratives

leaders, service providers, volunteer stations, former sponsors, staff, volunteers, and local funders.

The former RSVP projects that relinquished and closed in June, 2012 were a respected resource for organizations in the community. In fact, most of the volunteers who were displaced (when these projects closed) re-enrolled and were excited to be part of RSVP once again. However, our plan was not to necessarily duplicate previous services, but instead identify existing or emerging unmet community needs and develop impact-based volunteer assignments in partnership with appropriate volunteer stations. As the project developed, we continued to provide quality opportunities for RSVP volunteers to give back to the community in a variety of capacities (i.e. helping children improve reading skills, delivering meals to homebound elderly residents, leading an exercise class for seniors, helping distribute food or weatherize the homes for low-income families, helping an elementary student improve writing skills through correspondence, and more).

In addition to quality partnerships with the volunteer stations that produce rewarding and high impact volunteer opportunities, Central Iowa RSVP also has skilled staff, written volunteer placement policies/procedures that address volunteer training and development, and has already established a pool of 250 skilled and dedicated volunteers.

There are many beneficiaries of RSVP: the volunteers, the numerous agencies that depend on RSVP services, the clients and residents who rely on direct services from the volunteers, and ultimately the community as a whole. In the banking world, RSVP could be referred to as an asset-based organization because our funds are secured by assets, those assets being the skilled, committed, age 55+ members of our community who are engaged in life-changing and life-sustaining volunteer service because of RSVP. It is critical that we respect the needs of the volunteers and provide meaningful opportunities that will encourage them to stay engaged because the experience starts with them.

As with Central Iowa RSVP, it has been an ongoing goal of Central Iowa RSVP North to put the needs of our volunteers first and to recruit volunteers from all economic, educational, and social backgrounds. It is important that we respect the preferences and unique skills that each bring to his/her volunteer experience. We are committed to not only providing quality volunteer opportunities, but also the tools needed for our participants to make an impact through their volunteer service.

Narratives

RSVP works with the volunteer stations to ensure volunteers are receiving the highest level of training needed and desired. RSVP staff assists directly in the coordination of training for RSVP volunteers in the BASE Senior Fitness Program and the Winter Weatherization Project. Ongoing communication with both the volunteers and the Volunteer Stations is critical to effective volunteer management. RSVP volunteer coordinators maintain communication with volunteer site staff throughout the year. In Education (primary focus area), contact with teachers and other educators begins early in the school year or in some cases, at the end of the previous school year. For all of our school-based assignments, there are well-defined job descriptions with clear expectations related to volunteer background checks and volunteer duties. Volunteers are provided with appropriate instruction from educators and receive ongoing oversight from school staff as well as follow-up from RSVP staff. The same ongoing communication and oversight by RSVP volunteer coordinators working with educators applies to all of our volunteer assignments.

Through the development of strong partnerships with the volunteer stations, Central Iowa RSVP North has been able to successfully recruit and retain volunteers by placing them in rewarding volunteer activities and recognizing them for their service and accomplishments. Volunteer retention starts with RSVP staff creating a strong connection with the volunteers. All volunteers (or interested volunteers) are invited and encouraged to attend an RSVP orientation or to meet with staff one-on-one. This gives RSVP staff an opportunity to connect personally with the volunteers, explain our mission, volunteer benefits (supplemental insurance and mileage reimbursement), agencies served, volunteer impact, featured volunteer opportunities, and to emphasize our commitment to them. Group orientations are scheduled as needed.

After the orientation, volunteer applications are reviewed and opportunities discussed. All volunteers must either attend an orientation and/or be interviewed one-on-one by an RSVP staff in person before they are placed in a volunteer assignment. This personal contact allows us to more effectively assess the volunteers' abilities, habits, appearance (hygiene), etc. We can also visit with them in more detail about their interests and specific assignments so we can direct them in the best possible way.

Several of the volunteer assignments that are developed provide a great opportunity for RSVP volunteers to share experiences from their own lives. Whether sharing experiences with a child through inter-generational literacy programming or providing leadership working alongside college

Narratives

students to weatherize homes of low-income residents (for example), volunteers will be part of something that will enhance their own lives through serving others. RSVP is committed to offering opportunities that meet the individual needs of our volunteers, and enhance their personal lives.

RSVP seeks opportunities for our volunteers to build new skills and serve in leadership capacities through their volunteer assignments whenever possible. Some have been asked to assume roles that require learning new skills and developing leadership potential. For instance, the 12 RSVP volunteer leaders in our BASE Senior Fitness Program are not former fitness instructors. However, with professional training provided, they have been able to pursue a personal interest, learn the skills needed to be effective exercise instructors, and make a positive difference in the well-being of the participants.

During this grant cycle, RSVP will be conducting a satisfaction survey with all of the volunteers. This survey will give volunteers an opportunity to provide feedback on their satisfaction with their current assignments, frequency of contact by RSVP staff, etc. This will help the RSVP staff know how we are doing in the area of recruitment and development of volunteers and assignments and where Central Iowa RSVP North can make improvements.

Recognition is also critical to the retention of volunteers. The RSVP Advisory Council includes a committee that has the responsibility of assisting staff with the implementation of volunteer recognition. In addition to having events, RSVP volunteers are recognized on our website, on Facebook, in our newsletter ("brag book" photo page) and through feature stories printed in the local newspapers. Another way we recognize volunteers is to provide them with a name badge to wear while volunteering and in some cases, special shirts (BASE Fitness Instructors) We like to show off our volunteers! RSVP staff members often stop by during volunteer assignments just to greet and thank the volunteers. A gift (calendar) is sent to the volunteers each year along with a copy of our annual report, featuring volunteer assignments and outcomes data. This report provides a collective overview of what RSVP volunteers have accomplished and how community needs have been addressed. Sharing this with the volunteers is important so they can see how much of a difference they are making in their community.

Central Iowa RSVP North maintains and adheres to a written diversity and non-discrimination policy

Narratives

applicable to both volunteer and staff recruitment. Although our collective service area is not ethnically diverse (with nearly 86% of the population being White), at least 10% of the population of both Fort Dodge and Webster City is African American or Hispanic. In Webster City, 8.2% of children come from homes where a language other than English is spoken. Through volunteer assignments in the schools and our winter weatherization project, we have been able to find ways to serve ethnic minorities in these counties. However, the language, socio-economic and cultural barriers have made it difficult to engage this population in volunteer service. With help from our Advisory Council, RSVP plans to develop a strategy for reaching out to recruit volunteers from more ethnically diverse populations.

Other areas of diversity are well represented in both our volunteer pool and our Advisory Council. The RSVP Advisory Council represents differences in age, gender, community connectedness, education, occupation, residence, disabilities, and to the degree that is possible, ethnicity. In 2013, we established one Advisory Council representing both Hamilton and Webster Counties. As with our Advisory Council, we also maintain a varied pool of volunteers in these areas of diversity. Although we only started tracking the veteran population in our volunteer pool 1 year ago, we estimate that 15-20% of our volunteers are veterans.

Program Management

As the sponsors of an RSVP project since 1973, Story City Senior Citizens, Inc. and the RSVP Director serving Central Iowa RSVP North have extensive experience in managing a national service program. There are internal policies and procedures in place to ensure effective program management. This well-established infrastructure is being duplicated in this newer service area. RSVP continues to assess and implement policies that address volunteer station development and volunteer assignment oversight. Residents of these counties and the agencies and organizations we serve have embraced RSVP's focused approach in having a greater impact meeting the needs of the communities. As the new performance measurement requirements are implemented, we will continue programming in a way that is consistent with grant requirements and meeting current and emerging community needs.

Ongoing contact with both the volunteers and the volunteer stations is required to assure that roles are well-defined, that needs and responsibilities are being met, and that volunteers are being appropriately utilized. No volunteers are placed with an agency that is not a registered and qualified

Narratives

RSVP volunteer station. When a volunteer station is registered, RSVP coordinators meet one-on-one with appropriate staff, providing general information on volunteer management, reviewing all of the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding, including but not limited to, requirements in the RSVP Federal Regulations Subpart F (Responsibilities of a Volunteer Station). RSVP staff review roles, expectations, limitations, assurances, volunteer hours reporting, non-discrimination, volunteer support and safety, etc. All contacts are identified and the appropriate signature is obtained.

RSVP follows up with partnering organizations regularly to assure that timesheets are being validated and submitted, volunteer needs are being met, and outcomes (when appropriate) are being reported. A new procedure will soon be implemented with RSVP staff tracking communication with the volunteer stations. The station roster will be modified, categorizing the type of communication being made by RSVP staff (phone call, email, site/volunteer visit, volunteer safety visit, Memorandum of Understanding renewal, etc). This will allow RSVP coordinators to see if there are any volunteer stations being neglected and assure that follow up is taking place.

In a similar way, RSVP coordinators currently track newly assigned volunteers. All volunteers receive follow-up communication related to their volunteer experience and their satisfaction within a short time after placement. If a volunteer expresses dissatisfaction, RSVP coordinators follow up with the volunteer site and work with both their staff and the volunteer to resolve any issues. This does happen but it is rare. When recruitment and placement procedures are thorough, the volunteer station/volunteer matches are typically successful.

Central Iowa RSVP North (using strategies implemented by Central Iowa RSVP) carefully selects volunteer stations, enlisting only those partnerships that provide an opportunity to address a community need that meets our priorities and that has demonstrates the intent to meet the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding. Partnerships will continue that help us meet the new performance measurement requirements and our overall program design. With Education as the Primary Focus Area, along with assignments developed in other Focus Areas, and an allowance of 30% of our volunteers serving in Community Priorities, we do not anticipate having to eliminate volunteer stations.

At the end of this grant period, RSVP will conduct a survey of volunteer station satisfaction and

Narratives

volunteer impact. Although RSVP gets informal feedback from many of the volunteer stations regarding the value of the services provided by RSVP volunteers, this survey will give all active volunteer stations an opportunity to more specifically report about the impact RSVP volunteers have made in enhancing and delivering their services.

One of the characteristics that has made RSVP a unique and respected resource for area organizations is the diversity of our services. Even though we have streamlined our work plan development to address impact-based programming, we have still maintained high-level assignments that fall into several of Corporation for National & Community Service's Focus Areas, specifically in Education, Healthy Futures, and Economic Opportunity. Also, school-based programming and projects (successfully implemented in Central Iowa RSVP's project) have been duplicated and incorporated into various language arts curriculum at area schools in Central Iowa RSVP North's service area. Among those is: Literacy Partners Writing Project, Head Start Assistance, and Reading Buddies.

Last fiscal year, 122 RSVP volunteers served 199 students in 2 school districts and 1 Head Start programs. Of those collective assignments, all intermediate and end outcomes targets were met and overall they exceeded the targets by an average of 18%. By contrast there were 43 volunteers who served in other Focus Areas or in assignments that would fall under Community Priorities. RSVP can still maintain a high level of service in other Focus Areas, but we have successfully engaged volunteers to serve in education-based assignments and plan to expand on that success.

Central Iowa RSVP North has internal written procedures for staff to follow in ensuring that we are in compliance with federal regulations that address volunteer recruitment. The volunteer application contains all the fields needed to assure a volunteer is eligible to serve and access RSVP benefits. No placements are made that would compromise adherence to federal regulations as they are outlined in our agency's Volunteer Placement Policies and outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer stations.

Central Iowa RSVP North also meets federal requirements that address the involvement of a community participation group. An 11-member Advisory Council with representation from both counties has been established. Although this group has only been serving for just over one year, they have proven to be an involved council. This past year they have supported RSVP staff with marketing,

Narratives

volunteer recruitment and recognition, and special projects. The council represents the following groups: RSVP volunteers, RSVP volunteer stations, Iowa State University Extension, banking, faith-based community, and education.

In addition to promoting RSVP and fostering good public relations in the communities they live, members of the Advisory Council also assist with assessment of the overall operation of the project, and as RSVP ambassadors and advocates, they can support staff in evaluating the following: programmatic policies and procedures (i.e., reimbursement provisions, content of volunteer applications, personnel policies and issues, etc.), Director's annual performance evaluation, fiscal and budgetary recommendations, compliance (corporate/federal regulations), risk management, volunteer recruitment strategies, special events, marketing and technology, and outcomes data management and collection.

Organizational Capability

The Story City Senior Citizens (SCSC), Inc. is the administrator of the Story City Senior Center (managing activities and facilities) and the Sponsoring agency for Central Iowa RSVP and Central Iowa RSVP North. SCSC, Inc. has been the sponsor for Story County RSVP for over 40 years. In response to a needs assessment that was conducted in Story City and surrounding communities, the Story City Senior Center was opened to provide social and educational programming for seniors. Also, a grant to start an RSVP project was awarded to provide a mechanism to link older adults with meaningful volunteer service. Since that time, RSVP staff under the leadership of SCSC, Inc. has expanded the program to reach volunteers throughout Story County and beginning in 2003, Marshall County. In addition, SCSC, Inc. is the sponsor for Central Iowa RSVP North, which operates under a separate grant and is the subject of this narrative. This project serves 2 counties just north and west of Central Iowa RSVP and represents 2 former projects that relinquished their RSVP grants in 2011. Story City Senior Citizens, Inc. was awarded state funding in July, 2012 to restore services to this geographic area and was awarded a federal grant through the competition process in September, 2012.

The 13-member Story City Senior Citizens, Inc. board of directors characterizes a cross-section of the community with members representing business, agriculture, public safety, city government, banking, retired adults (RSVP volunteers), and volunteer stations. This active and involved board administers policy, employs staff members, and advocates for older adult volunteerism in the service area. As RSVP sponsors since 1973, SCSC, Inc. has extensive experience in managing an RSVP project as well

Narratives

as managing federal grant funds. They are knowledgeable about the needs of rural Iowa and are supportive of RSVP's expansion into Hamilton and Webster counties. Shannon Bryan, (Assistant Vice-President -- Reliance State Bank) a dedicated Sponsor Board member and SCSC, Inc. Treasurer, serves as the liaison to both Central Iowa RSVP and Central Iowa RSVP North Advisory Councils. SCSC, Inc. and Central Iowa RSVP North conform with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States. An annual audit is conducted by a contracted CPA firm. Central Iowa RSVP North utilizes QuickBooks Pro to track financial activity. There have been no audit findings.

All staff positions have detailed job descriptions and well developed personnel policies are reviewed every 3 years by the RSVP Advisory Council and the Sponsor Board. Staff members include 2 full-time employees, one 80% time employee and one 62.5% time employee. This dedicated group of individuals provides a great combination of experience, education, and commitment. They represent diverse skills and personalities that respect and complement each other. They are a well-developed team with clearly defined roles and a commitment to senior service. Please note that the Director and the Administrative Assistant, although full-time employees, are approved by the Iowa Corporation State Office to have their employment split between Central Iowa RSVP and Central Iowa RSVP North.

Director, Kalen Petersen, is responsible for the overall management of the project and all programs, including supervising and supporting staff, securing financial resources (i.e. grant writing), administering all components of the federal grant, programmatic oversight of internal policies/procedures and federal regulations, implementing goals and objectives that address volunteer recruitment, marketing strategies, recognition, evaluation, fundraising functions, assignment development, etc. Kalen has a Bachelor's Degree from Iowa State University in Adult Education (Family and Consumer Sciences) and has been employed with RSVP since July 1989, serving the last 23 years as Director with Central Iowa RSVP and 2 years with Central Iowa RSVP North. Kalen has participated in numerous trainings and educational opportunities, including extensive training in impact-based programming and grant management. Kalen has served in several leadership roles within the Iowa RSVP Directors Association and has served on the National RSVP Directors Board, representing 10 states in the North Central Cluster. Kalen has developed the skills and leadership abilities needed to operate a successful RSVP project. This position is shared between Central Iowa RSVP and Central Iowa RSVP North.

Administrative Assistant, Pat Firnhaber, has over 30 years of experience in bookkeeping, accounting and office management. She is extremely organized, thorough, and efficient, effectively following

Narratives

general accounting practices. Pat was welcomed back to work for Central Iowa RSVP/Central Iowa RSVP North one year ago after retiring for 3 years. Because all bookkeeping is done internally, Pat has extensive experience in managing the RSVP budget, preparing payroll, managing accounts payable and receivable, preparing and submitting all necessary financial and draw down documents/reports, and assisting as needed with volunteer recruitment, recognition, etc. Pat has a very good understanding and working knowledge of federal regulations and the statutes of the OMB circulars, as does the RSVP Director. This position is shared between Central Iowa RSVP and Central Iowa RSVP North.

Two part-time volunteer coordinators are on staff for Central Iowa RSVP North. Their primary role is to recruit, interview, mobilize, and support RSVP volunteers. The volunteer coordinators implement recruitment strategies and recruit volunteers according to RSVP guidelines, follow up on volunteer placements and assignments, and maintain good communication and cooperative working relationships with the volunteers, volunteer site staff, RSVP staff, community leaders, and media sources. They also assist the director with public relations, recognition, evaluation, fundraising, and special projects.

Becky Koppen (former educator) is an 80% time employee and has been serving as the Volunteer Coordinator for Hamilton County since September, 2012. Mark Gustafson (retired pastor) is employed 62.5% time and started as the Volunteer Coordinator for Webster County in February, 2013.

Both coordinators have a great rapport with the volunteers, community leaders, agency staff, etc. They have successfully developed a quality pool of volunteers and continue to explore ways for RSVP to expand. Both Becky and Mark are committed to the Focus Area of Education and have quickly built great relationships with area schools and educators.

Internally, Central Iowa RSVP North staff members are cross-trained to assist each other and support the Director. All are prepared and willing to step in and help out in other areas if needed. In addition, all critical tasks performed by staff are documented with written instructions. Coordinators submit weekly staff reports to the Director, noting significant tasks and assignments accomplished. Each staff member also presents a monthly report to the Sponsor Board of Directors. In this grant cycle, RSVP will be assessing the "succession management" procedures in place and determining how they can be improved, especially as it relates to the Director's position.

*Performance evaluations of all staff positions are conducted annually. Support staff can submit a confidential supervisor evaluation (of the Director) to the chair of the Advisory Council Chair and the

Narratives

Sponsor Board President. This is used in the performance evaluation of the Director, conducted by the Sponsor Board President and Chair of the Project Management Committee. The RSVP Director conducts annual performance evaluations of subordinate staff.

In addition to quality staff, Central Iowa RSVP North has office facilities that are fully adequate for staff to conduct all necessary business, In-kind office space has been provided (in the Senior Center) for RSVP's main office for the entire 41 year history (Central Iowa RSVP). In return, RSVP provides a staff presence at the Center weekdays, offering assistance with information and referral as needed. All programming activities at the Center are coordinated by board members.

In 2007, the City of Story City purchased a large building in downtown Story City and renovated it for the Story City Senior Citizens, Inc. to house the Senior Community Center and RSVP offices. (The city committed \$300,000 to this project, which is well-supported by the community). SCSC, Inc. and RSVP moved to our new location in March, 2008 and now have all new office space that is more efficient and technologically wired. The facilities include excellent storage, a community room with seating for 150, a meeting room, and a very large kitchen, all available to RSVP at no charge. In addition, RSVP staff helps SCSC, Inc. with the rental of the facility for a variety of events. For that service, RSVP retains 25% of all rental fees, providing both Central Iowa RSVP and Central Iowa RSVP North with self-generated local match. Both satellite office locations have affordable and adequate facilities with all the necessary equipment (computers, copier/printers, etc.) and supplies to run effectively. The Webster City office is located in the Senior Community Center and the Fort Dodge office is located in Citizens Central, sharing space with the Fort Dodge Foster Grandparent Program.

Financial management of the project is the responsibility of the Director, Administrative Assistant, the Sponsor Board President and Treasurer. Invoices are posted and budget reports are prepared by the administrative assistant, reviewed and approved by the Director, with signatures and final approval from the sponsor executives. All invoices are reviewed and approved by the Director, as well as all supplies and other budgeted expenses. With review by the Director and final approval by the board (President or Treasurer), collectively we are assuring that expenditures are appropriate and necessary. A full audit is conducted (by a contracted CPA firm) annually of Central Iowa RSVP and Central Iowa RSVP North's accounting books. The Administrative Assistant is responsible for tracking all

Narratives

income and expenses as well as drawing down on local and federal funds. The Director is responsible for the management of the budget, closely monitoring expenses, income, and in-kind contributions. The director and Sponsor executive are responsible for preparing funding proposals and securing the funds necessary for the program to operate. The Director meets regularly with the Administrative Assistant to review all financial data, including budget projections, balances, accounts payable, funding received to date, etc. These checks and balances help assure accountability, efficiency, and effective use of available resources.

SCSC, Inc./Central Iowa RSVP/Central Iowa RSVP North has written policies in place for compliance with federal, state, and internal procedures, including fiscal internal controls, diversity and non-discrimination, volunteer hours tracking and reporting, volunteer safety, facility accessibility assessment, criminal background checks, etc. In addition to staff and board involvement, the RSVP Advisory Council members are available to assist with assessment of several aspects of the project.

Having been federally funded for less than 2 years, Central Iowa RSVP North has not yet secured funding from local sources, except for the State of Iowa. For that reason, local match makes up just over 20% of the budget. However, in 2013, Iowa RSVP's received an increase in State funding. This increase served as confirmation from state legislators that they recognize RSVP as a valuable and cost-effective way to meet the needs of Iowans. During this grant cycle, we will pursue funding from other non-federal sources of support, including the Fort Dodge Area United Way and Community Foundation.

Story City Senior Citizens, Inc. and Central Iowa RSVP North are committed to the accountability of every aspect of our project. SCSC, Inc. has a history of sound financial/grants management and competent staff oversight. We strive to use the tools provided to us through the Corporation for National and Community Service (i.e. National Service Knowledge Network, online courses, virtual conference workshops, RSVP Handbook), the Iowa Non-profit Resource Center, the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service, and other resources to assure that we are conducting all business in an effective and accountable way.

As the current sponsor of this project, we are mindful of the considerable responsibility we have in effectively using the funds entrusted to us. We know it is crucial that the investment made in RSVP

Narratives

has a high return and we are working every day to not only provide meaningful opportunities for RSVP volunteers but to develop assignments that have measurable outcomes and a significant impact on the community. We will continue to ensure that RSVP participants deliver the high quality of service that our network of community partners have come to expect.

Other

Under the leadership of SCSC, Inc. Central Iowa RSVP and Central Iowa RSVP North continue to look for ways to have more effective program delivery. We are excited for the opportunity to become part of the Service Enterprise Initiative in 2015. Nonprofits that effectively leverage the skills and talents of volunteers into their core operations are known as "service enterprises." Research conducted by TCC Group, a national program evaluation firm, demonstrates that service enterprises are more adaptable, sustainable and capable of scaling their impact in comparison to peer organizations and, as a result, are able to more effectively deliver on the social mission of their organization. And yet, less than 15 percent of nonprofits nationwide operate in this manner.

Through a multi-month engagement with Volunteer Iowa, both RSVP projects will move through a change management process that will result in more effectively leveraging the time and talents of volunteers and lead to greater impact. RSVP staff and leadership will access this innovative training and consulting support to become a service enterprise. This research-based assessment of our existing organizational capacity and volunteer engagement practices will involve up to 16 hours of training to assist in re-tooling the roles and ways in which we engage volunteers. Over the span of this process we will address unique organizational opportunities and challenges. One of our goals is to increase the engagement of volunteers utilized internally to increase our proficiency in appropriately leveraging the time and skills of volunteers to meet the social mission of our organization.

With leadership provided by the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service, Central Iowa RSVP/Central Iowa RSVP North will consider (if appropriate) serving as a Service Enterprise Hub for our area, engaging staff and volunteers in helping other non-profits to operate as service enterprises. This strategy is outlined in a Capacity Building work plan. The designated outcome outlined in the Appendix B Performance Measure Requirements indicates an outcome (G3-3.3) that is tied to the number of organizations implementing effective volunteer management practices. Therefore, the summary in the work plan only reflects a target of one.

Narratives

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

NOT APPLICABLE