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Executive Summary

An estimated 200 RSVP volunteers will serve. Some of their activities will include: assisting in Head Start classrooms, tutoring in public schools and after-school programs, providing companionship to homebound and older adults, providing respite to caregivers, leading Bone Builder classes, and assisting older and disabled veterans. The Primary Focus Area of this project is Education. At the end of the three-year grant, 150 early childhood recipients will be assisted with 75 children demonstrating gains in school readiness in terms of literacy skills (ED24), and 90 students will be tutored in STEM-related math and science skills with 45 students in grades K-6 demonstrating improved academic engagement (ED27).

Other Focus Area with outcomes: Healthy Futures

34 of 54 Home bound or older adults and individuals with disabilities will report having increased social ties/perceived social support (H9)

18 of 35 Caregivers or home bound or older adults and individuals with disabilities will report having increased social ties/perceived social support. (H14)

The CNCS federal investment of \$91,702 will be supplemented by \$93,286 anticipated level of non-federal sources.

Strengthening Communities

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

Our Primary Focus area is Education with emphases on school readiness (early childhood literacy) and academic engagement (K-6 STEM-science, technology, engineering, and math).

The University of Maine Center on Aging RSVP has four counties in its service area which are predominantly rural (agriculture, fishing, and forestry) with one major service center in Bangor (population 33, 039) for the region. These counties are Hancock, Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Washington. According to a 2012 report by the John T. Gorman Foundation, Maine has the highest percentage of households in poverty for New England with Washington County having the highest rate of child poverty (29%) which has persisted for several decades, and Piscataquis County has the

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state's highest percentage of single mothers which is a childhood poverty marker. Another indicator for childhood poverty is the number of children receiving free and reduced lunches; the average percentage of our four counties is 55% with Piscataquis and Washington Counties having the higher percentages in the state (Kids Count Data Center, 2014).

These statistics point to potential deficiencies in literacy and math/science skills as children in our service area enter school. Families focused on money for basics, such as food and shelter, do not spend money on quality early childhood literature, have little or no time to read aloud to children, and many are functionally illiterate according to Mary Lyons of Literacy Volunteers of Bangor. "Too many low income children enter kindergarten behind their higher income peers in language and pre-reading skills (Maine Children's Growth Council Report, 2012). Another factor to consider involves the 2014 Maine Department of Education Report Cards for public schools which list sixteen elementary schools in our service area receiving grades of D or F in a wide range of measures including reading, math, and science. Intervention in the early childhood and elementary years is imperative to reading scores and better preparing children for future success. According to STEM Education in Maine (2012), "Economic disadvantage is clearly tied to reduced achievement in both science and math." Research on STEM education has shown that children who experience STEM early through hands-on learning are the ones who will be best equipped to develop a strong understanding of STEM concepts as they get older (www.weareteachers.com).

RSVP volunteers will re-inforce and supplement what Head Starts and public schools attempt to achieve when it comes to school readiness and academic engagement for their pupils. When it comes to STEM, volunteers with scientific expertise are especially critical for stimulating children considering many elementary teachers in our state lack science certification according to a report from STEM Education in Maine (2012).

2. Describe how the service activities in the Primary Focus Area lead to National Performance measure outputs and/or outcomes.

School Readiness:

RSVP volunteers will serve as readers, visiting Head Starts, early childhood care centers, and rural preschools on a weekly basis to read aloud to children and engage them in book extension and literacy enhancing activities. Reading activities may be done in a group or on a one-to-one basis. Volunteers will read a minimum of one hour per week to children whom childcare providers have identified would benefit from being read aloud to and exposed to literacy-enhancing activities. The childcare

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providers will be given pre and post surveys to evaluate changes in the identified children in the following areas: sitting still while listening to a story, exploring books independently, participating by asking questions, chanting along, retelling the story in play or during story time, and demonstrating expanded vocabulary and conversation skills. These skill areas are considered school readiness markers in terms of early childhood literacy (State of Maine Early Childhood Learning Guidelines, 2005).

K-12 Success (We will cover K-6 Success):

Volunteers with professional and/or educational backgrounds in STEM will engage children in hands-on activities to peak their excitement, build skills, and develop a love of STEM subjects which will carry over into existing STEM programs in the higher grades. Children will be identified by the staff of partnering schools with a particular focus on girls who are still under-represented in STEM fields, at-risk students, and other students that school staff deem would benefit. Students will be matched with volunteers on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. Volunteer tutoring hours served will depend upon the school setting and time required for various hands-on activities. We anticipate 10-20 volunteer-led activities per school year. Initially, we are targeting grades K-2 math and science skills. The volunteer-led activity modules will align with the new Next Generation Science Standards (adopted by the state of Maine beginning Fall 2014) and the current Common Core State Standards for Mathematics. Later on in the three year grant cycle, we will pursue grades 3-6 for participation. Also, we are modeling the volunteer experience after a volunteer-driven program in our state called the Maine School Science Volunteers which is an established non-profit in southern Maine utilizing programming out of Northeastern University for the middle school students.

Teachers will complete pre/post surveys on K-2 children who participate in RSVP math and science activities. These surveys will indicate initial level and improvement in academic engagement with math and science material. The indicators (identified through research and according to a professional educator on our STEM steering committee) to be measured will include increases in the following behaviors: attentiveness in classroom during math and science lessons, asking and responding to questions, seeking additional information on math and science concepts that have been presented, and ability to retain information. Therefore, we expect to see improved academic engagement with elementary students as a result of the tutoring by RSVP STEM volunteers.

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

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As a part of the University of Maine Center on Aging, we are fortunate to have access to staff with expertise in community needs assessments as well as evaluations of programming to assist us with ensuring that we are utilizing appropriate instruments and analysis for collecting and reporting outputs and outcomes. The RSVP director and coordinator have taken advantage of two years of CNCS Virtual Conference presentations and materials on program evaluation from which to develop, modify, and apply to specific service activities. For examples, we will be using a modified Senior Companion Program Independent Living Skills and Respite surveys for activities in the Healthy Futures focus area. Both the director and coordinator have had other training over the years from CNCS around programming for impact, the United Way of Eastern Maine's logic model performance measures, and the Maine Commission for Community Service return on investment reporting. We rely on station supervisors to collect data which tracks the number of recipients of service per volunteer at their sites. We also work closely with station supervisors to insert, whenever possible, questions on their station surveys to beneficiaries that reflect the CNCS outcomes we aim to achieve in lieu of making beneficiaries complete two different surveys. All survey data results, pre and post, will be submitted to the RSVP office where it will be entered by the program coordinator, reviewed and analyzed by the RSVP staff, and stored electronically for CNCS and other funder reports.

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

All of our focus areas include activities in which veterans and/or military family members will be served. In our Primary Focus Area, children from military families will benefit from our early childhood literacy program and our K-6 academic engagement in STEM. Since Maine has a significant number of National Guard and Reserve Units scattered throughout our service area and there are no military installation base schools, the children of the Guard and Reserve are in our public schools and Head Starts/childcare educational centers. In our Healthy Futures focus area, older veterans and/or their spouses will be among the recipients of respite, companionship, home-delivered meals, health insurance education, and Bone Builder classes. We selected the Veterans and Military Families (V1) as one of our focus areas. Under this umbrella, veterans of all ages will be served by volunteers at a Vet Center or a VA Community-based Outpatient Clinic. Others will be supported by volunteers planning and assisting with events such as resource fairs and various forms of outreach. Veterans in need of rehabilitative services or long-term residential care will be served by volunteers at two veterans' homes.

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Recruitment and Development

1. 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 through service in their communities.

The University of Maine Center on Aging RSVP, over the course of its 12 years in existence, has delivered the consistent message that volunteering is a part of healthy aging while encouraging volunteers to "Lead with Experience". Volunteers want to feel like a part of something special and want to know that their service makes a difference in the lives of others. Communication and planning are the keys to creating and sustaining a program that maximizes the volunteer experience and forges community partnerships that yield tangible results. Our mission states the following: "RSVP members, age 55 and older, invest their skills and life experiences to make a difference for generations in eastern Maine through volunteer service." Our tagline for marketing materials states, "We are senior volunteers responding to critical community needs".

Using the national performance measures from CNCS as a guide, we have emphasized creating diverse community partnerships with potential volunteer stations which would create opportunities for senior volunteers to be engaged physically, socially, and intellectually with recipients of service as well as station staff. With our Healthy Futures volunteer opportunities, we provide RSVP members access to directly assist older adults to age in place --meal delivery, respite, and companionship. Other volunteers will support seniors in access to care through leading Bone Builder classes or distributing/explaining health insurance information to recipients. For seniors who want to give back to those who have served in the military, our two veterans initiatives provide various access points to support vets and military family members. Our Primary Focus area in Education capitalizes on the value of intergenerational volunteer opportunities with children in early childhood to youth in grade 6 for those volunteers who enjoy serving youth. We will have 85% of our volunteers in CNCS strategic focus areas. Within each of these focus areas, opportunities exist for volunteers to utilize their skills as well as develop new ones, such as leadership skills, to gain knowledge about healthy aging, and to develop deep social bonds with other seniors or children.

An example of the levels of communication and planning that it takes to create a high quality volunteer experience is demonstrated by what project staff have been doing since earlier this year to establish a new volunteer option within the Education Focus Area. This fall we are rolling out our new STEM -- science, technology, engineering, and mathematics -- program for grades K-6. Here are the steps that have been taken to ensure quality programming before we place volunteers in a school or

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after-school setting:

1. Examined ways in which we could augment opportunities for volunteers to serve children in educational settings
2. Looked at our track record within RSVP educational programming and staff connections/expertise from experiences in FGP and teaching
3. Identified a national, state and local critical need to strengthen math and science skills at the elementary level where STEM programs rarely exist, particularly in our service area.
4. Reviewed our volunteer base, current and potential, for possible interest and those with STEM-related backgrounds (for example: we have a significant number of professional retirees in our service area who worked for General Electric, a bio-medicine research facility, university professors in engineering, aeronautical companies, etc.)
5. Explored potential collaborations and opportunities for resource development to support the program
6. Created a steering committee to guide us in the process of developing mission/vision statements, marketing, volunteer position descriptions, code of ethics for volunteers serving children and working with teachers, training modules, activities, pre and post surveys, etc.
7. Conversated with potential school and after-school sites for potential volunteer placements in our four county service area
8. Recruiting and training volunteers (in process while this grant is being written).

2. Your plan and infrastructure to ensure RSVP volunteers receive training needed to be highly effective means to addressing identified community needs in both the Primary Focus Area and in Other Focus Areas.

Since we are in a university setting, this RSVP has a natural dedication to maintain high professional standards with a priority of training and skill development not only for staff, but for volunteers. These volunteers represent the University of Maine in the communities in which they serve.

Prior to being placed at a station, the RSVP coordinator explains the training required to the volunteers. The coordinator researches and tracks training requirements/schedules. This way volunteers are more informed when they go for a station interview. In working closely with station supervisors, the importance of pre-service orientation (with a strong emphasis on confidentiality) and training for all volunteers is valued as a part of best practices in overall volunteer management enabling them to successfully fulfill the responsibilities of their volunteer position description. Also,

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RSVP staff provides pre-service orientation and training for three volunteer opportunities (a total of 93 volunteers out of our mandated 200) within the focus areas utilizing curricula and protocols based on national or state programming. These are volunteer opportunities requiring a higher level skill set.

1. Education: (Primary Focus Area):

In-house pre-service orientations and trainings will be provided by RSVP staff for volunteers in our early childhood literacy and academic engagement in science and math via our "Roots for STEM" initiatives. We anticipate conducting in-service trainings periodically to further enhance the development of the programming and for volunteers to share with each other best practices and challenges to ensure better outcomes for the children. We will draw upon programs such as the Maine School Science Volunteers project in southern Maine and the Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance for support in developing STEM volunteer training materials.

2. Healthy Futures:

For our volunteers serving in the capacity of home meal delivery, companionship (Elder Buddies), and distribution of information regarding health insurance (SHIP), they are trained by staff at Eastern Area Agency on Aging (EAAA) with materials developed by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. EAAA has been a consistent partner for this RSVP. The length of training depends upon the level of skills and protocols that must be followed. The Hospice of Eastern Maine (through Eastern Maine Healthcare System) trains respite volunteers for most of our service area; the volunteers complete a comprehensive training course, complemented by regular in-service education programs. Respite volunteers for adult day service programs in our area are trained in a proven model of care called The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer's Care. Bone Builders volunteers are trained by an independent contractor for RSVP who is a nationally certified fitness trainer with a background in kinesiology. He was trained a few years ago by a Master Bone Builders Trainer. The initial training is six hours with him. Generally, Bone Builder lay leaders (volunteers) were previously class participants. If they were not, they are sent to observe various Bone Builder classes as a part of their training. Volunteers, regardless of how long they have served as lay leaders, must attend one re-training each year (these trainings are offered twice a year). Many volunteers will come to both offerings, and experienced volunteer lay leaders often assist the fitness consultant with some aspects of a particular training.

3. Veterans/Military Family Members:

For our Other Community-based initiative with a regional Maine Military and Community Network,

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volunteers receive training offered through workshops and conferences sponsored by the State Maine Military and Community Network affiliated with the Maine National Guard. Volunteers serving veterans at local vet centers and veteran clinics must undergo training by the Veterans Administration located at the Maine VA Hospital near our state capital. Those who serve at Maine Veterans Homes receive orientation and training by the volunteer services coordinator. Also, a new collaboration with an AmeriCorps VISTA who has established a Vet to Vet project has invited us to attend trainings in southern Maine which may benefit our volunteers who serve veterans.

In addition to the above, this RSVP, through its local sponsor the University of Maine Center on Aging, is well-positioned to offer additional forms of training to enhance volunteer service for those who choose to do so. The Center on Aging administers a state-wide Encore Leadership Corps which engages Baby Boomers in educational workshops on such topics as how to improve volunteer service skills, how to deal with stress from volunteering to avoid burnt-out, conflict resolution, and developing leadership skills. Our volunteers are invited to attend these and other seminars around aging in place that are presented by the Center on Aging. They are also able to attend certain workshops offered by the UMaine Cooperative Extension. Also, one of our funders, the United Way of Eastern Maine, periodically offers free or reduced price trainings for volunteers in specific service areas. RSVP staff is kept informed of these volunteer trainings as a result of our participation in the Peer-to-Peer Volunteer Manager Network from their VolunteerGen grant.

3. The demographics of the community served and plans to recruit a volunteer pool reflective of the community served. This could possibly include:

- o Individuals from diverse races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, or degrees of English language proficiency
- o Veterans and military family members as RSVP volunteers
- o RSVP volunteers with disabilities

University of Maine Center on Aging RSVP serves four counties: Hancock and Washington Counties (primarily rural and coastal fishing/lobstering communities and the most sparsely populated); Piscataquis County (primarily rural, agricultural and forestry communities); and Penobscot County which contains the major service center (Bangor, the third largest city in Maine with a population 33,039 in 2014) for our entire RSVP service area. This county has a mix of industry, farming, forest products, human services, educational centers, and retail establishments for its economic base.

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Actually, Penobscot has two distinct regions, northern and southern. The northern portion is experiencing significant out-migration of young adults, mill closures, and seniors living below poverty level compared to the southern region.

As you can see from the below demographics, our service area is largely homogenous with nearly 95% of the population identifying themselves as non-Hispanic white. The area with the greatest ethnic mix is Penobscot County in the greater Bangor area. Less than 1 % have limited English proficiency in our service area according to the cited sources below. We are a state which has 65% of its veterans with disabilities and a significant number of those reside in our four counties. Also in our area, we have the Penobscot Indian Nation (Penobscot County) and the Passamaquoddy Indian Tribe (Washington County).

DEMOGRAPHICS: Sources: <http://suburbanstats.org/population/Maine> (2013/2014) and www.jtgfoundation.org Demographic Profile of Maine, 2012, and Quick.facts.census.gov (2010-2014)

Hancock County: Population 54,418

96% White; 1% Hispanic/Latino; below 1% Asian; Below 1% American Indian; Median age 46; Number of those age 55 and older is 18,914 (35% of the population); Number of Veterans 5,564 (10% of the population)

As a coastal community, this county is comprised of many summer residents.

Penobscot County: Population 153, 923

95% White; 1% American Indian; 1.2% Hispanic/Latino; Below 1% Asian; Median age 39; Number of those age 55 and older is 41,328 (27% of the population); Number of Veterans 14,368 (9% of the population)

The Greater Bangor area has the highest educated citizenry in our service area (4 year degree and more).

This county has the greatest percentage of military family members as well as the greatest number of veterans in our service area.

Piscataquis County: Population 17,535

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96% White; Below 1% Hispanic/Latino or Asian; Median age 48; Number of those age 55 and older is 6,486 (37% of the population); Number of Veterans 2,088 (12% of the population)
This county has the greatest concentration of older veterans of the four counties we serve.

Washington County: Population 32, 856

92% White; 4.9% American Indian; 1 % Hispanic/Latino; Below 1% Asian; Median age 46; Number of those age 55 and older is 11,462 (35% of the population); Number of Veterans 3,852 (12% of the population)

This county has most limited transportation options for senior citizens to access services as well as volunteer sites.

Our general recruitment tactics provide access points to recruit a wide-ranging potential membership. They include the following:

1. Open house with current volunteers to inform them of new volunteer opportunities and give them recruitment packets as we all know satisfied volunteers are the best recruiters
2. Open house with current volunteers and invite them to bring a friend
3. The creation of 5 regional volunteer opportunities lists for publication and distribution by RSVP staff. The list details time commitment, number of opportunities, locations, training, and mileage reimbursement.
4. Program specific full-color-with-photo brochures have been designed in-house based on the Focus Areas for this program
5. Presentations and booths at retirement events, senior housing, Senior Expo, civic organizations, faith-based community programs, and retirement associations
6. Recruiting materials are left at stations, doctor offices, senior housing complexes, community centers, bookstores, and put on community bulletin boards
7. Through the Maine Commission for Community Service and the United Way of Eastern Maine we have access to VolunteerMaine.org and their global emails to post volunteer opportunities.
8. Through our sponsor, UM Center on Aging, we post opportunities and share volunteer stories and testimonials via Facebook, website, and on-line newsletters.
9. We utilize our Advisory Council members to leverage volunteer recruits as well.
10. Through collaborations with AmeriCorps VetCorps, TRIADs, an Aging and Disability Resource Center, Volunteers of America, and a Senior Centers, we are able to access a variety of potential

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volunteers. Our connection with VetCorps has been particularly helpful.

11. Periodically, RSVP staff speak on a Senior Talk Radio program which is heard throughout our four counties and will do live television interviews or promotions.

This RSVP has demonstrated over the years that we are inclusive of the varied elements in the senior population of our service area. Those with chronic conditions and disabilities are welcome as members, and we work around those challenges with station supervisors to ensure it is a win-win situation for both. An example is one of our current volunteers who is wheel-chair bound and speech-impaired who serves numerous hours for an Access to Care station and at a Communities Priorities site. One of newest recruits is the mother of a wounded warrior from the Iraqi theater of war. We currently have 16 veterans and 27 spouses of veterans. Often recipients of service are recruited as members. For example, several Bone Builder lay leaders came up through the ranks to be a leader after having been participants. Since we have many coastal communities in our service area with summer residents, we accept them as members whenever possible. Recruiting Native Americans in our service area requires identifying those with connections to the tribal leaders. We leave materials and encourage those we know with connections to the tribes to promote RSVP as willing to engage their members.

4. Your Plan and infrastructure to retain and recognize the RSVP volunteers.

Volunteer Retention:

1. We solicit volunteer feedback from the time they begin their assignment to their completion of an annual volunteer survey to ensure they are having a quality experience. RSVP staff follows up with volunteers who indicate otherwise.

2. Stations visits also offer an opportunity for RSVP staff to speak with a volunteer about his or her volunteer experience. It is important for RSVP staff to show an interest in what volunteers are doing for service.

3. Historically, our volunteers have felt comfortable with RSVP staff when needing to discuss problems at their station or when seeking a new volunteer position.

4. By maintaining good relationships with station supervisors, we are demonstrating our vested interest in providing a station with appropriate and quality volunteers for their programming and in turn, this translates to more positive experiences for volunteers at those stations.

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5. RSVP staff serve as a consultant to stations on volunteer management best practices including treating volunteers at all times with respect and not as employees. We want stations to maximize the use of a volunteer skill set without overburdening the volunteer.

As a result of these retention-related practices, we typically have less than 1% of our members leaving because they are unhappy with their placements.

Volunteer Recognition:

1. Our annual recognition event, with planning by and funds raised by our Advisory Council members, provides a means for volunteers to reflect on the value of their service to their communities as well as receive awards for years of service (5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 yrs.). In addition, each year we also identify an outstanding volunteer to receive the Kay Lebowitz Lifetime Legacy Award (Ms. Lebowitz was a long-time RSVP member who had been recognized at the federal, state, and local levels for her commitment to community service and engaging others in civic affairs). This award was created by Center on Aging RSVP and is given out at the annual recognition appreciation luncheon. At the recognition, we invite a keynote speaker who has media appeal thus fostering greater community awareness of the program. We also issue a press release prior to the event.
2. We seek opportunities to nominate volunteers for awards at the local, state, and federal level whenever possible. This past year 4 volunteers received the Presidential Service Awards. Each year, volunteers with over 500 hours of service have their names submitted to the Maine Commission for Community Service which oversees the Governor's Service Award for the Roll of Honor. Recipients are invited to the state capital for a special ceremony. In years past, we have also submitted a volunteer name for consideration for the To Those Who Care Award run by our local NBC television affiliate.
3. The UMaine Center on Aging on-line newsletter and Facebook pages provide opportunities to share stories and testimonials about volunteering through RSVP.
4. If, during the course of the year, a volunteer achievement in our eyes has seemingly gone unrecognized by a station, we creatively find a way to honor this individual's efforts.
5. RSVP staff recognize volunteer efforts and achievements during station visits.
6. RSVP staff says "Thank you for all you do" in all correspondence with volunteers.

Program Management

1. Your plan and infrastructure to ensure management of volunteer stations in compliance with RSVP

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program regulations, such as preventing or identifying prohibited activities.

As an incumbent applicant, we have 12 years of experience with successful management of agencies, schools, and other organizations that have chosen to become RSVP stations. For example, our memorandum of understanding with each station includes the following statements:

A. Separation from Volunteer Service: The partnering agency may request the removal of an RSVP volunteer at any time. The RSVP volunteer may withdraw from service at the agency or RSVP at any time. Discussion of individual separation will occur among RSVP staff, volunteer agency staff and the volunteer to clarify the reasons for separation, resolve conflicts or take remedial action, including placement at another volunteer site.

B. Prohibited Activities: The agency will not request or assign RSVP volunteers to conduct or engage in religious, sectarian or political activities.

C. Displacement of Employees: The agency will not assign RSVP volunteers to any assignment which would displace employed workers or impair existing contracts for services.

D. Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation: The agency will maintain the programs and activities to which RSVP volunteers are assigned accessible to persons with disabilities and provide reasonable accommodation to allow persons with disabilities to participate in programs and activities.

E. Prohibition of Discrimination: The agency will not discriminate against RSVP volunteers or in the operation of its program on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, political affiliation, religion, or on the basis of disability, if the volunteer is a qualified individual with a disability.

7. Acknowledgement of RSVP: In all publicity featuring RSVP volunteers, the agency will identify the volunteers as such.

In addition, we require stations to complete Accessibility and Safety forms annually.

During annual station visits, project staff remind station representative(s) of the CNCS regulations pertaining to station compliance including the need to report volunteer service hours and that the station cannot request or receive compensation from the beneficiaries of RSVP volunteer service.

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

Developing and managing stations and volunteers is a multi-faceted process which includes frequent contact and feedback to assure program improvement and volunteer satisfaction. The RSVP program

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staff works directly with volunteer stations to assure assignments address community needs and provide meaningful placements for volunteers.

We firmly believe in developing strong relationships with our station supervisors by RSVP staff interacting with the station supervisor during the volunteer placement process and following up after three months or earlier to see if the station is satisfied with their RSVP volunteer, in addition to on-going contacts throughout the year. Even before a volunteer is placed at a station, we make it clear to both the station and volunteer what the expectations are and utilize volunteer position descriptions as a guide in that process. When appropriate, we assist stations with the creation or modification of their volunteer position descriptions based on best practices from CNCS and other trainings. Volunteers are contacted by phone during their first few months to see if the volunteer finds his or her position to be a good fit, and to see if the volunteer duties match what was discussed prior to the placement. Both station supervisors and volunteers are encouraged to contact an RSVP staff member if there are any concerns or issues which need to be addressed.

Other ways we ensure that volunteers are performing their assigned service activities include: conducting a volunteer satisfaction survey to receive feedback from volunteers about their current volunteer assignments or would like to change their volunteer placement; closely analyzing monthly time sheets provide clues that a volunteer may need to be contacted in order to resolve issues such as the station expecting too much of them or not providing them with enough service opportunities to keep them engaged. When that occurs, it is time to contact the volunteer and the station supervisor to remedy the situation. Periodic phone or email contact with stations beyond sending them time sheets can often prevent problems regarding volunteer assignments and thus increase volunteer retention rates. Our volunteer handbook, which is provided to each new RSVP member, also reminds volunteers to seek support from RSVP staff if any issue arises around their placement or assignment.

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

Since we are in the third year of our regular grant cycle and knew re-competition was coming, we enacted a two year plan for gradually graduating certain stations and volunteers prior to writing this grant. In the first year, we phased out volunteers who had very few hours of volunteer service or stations where only one volunteer was serving in a non-focus area activity. The second year, we

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began approaching volunteers in non-focus area activities to consider switching to or adding on to their volunteer service a focus area station at which they could serve. Stations such as public libraries, senior centers, and nursing homes were gradually phased out as some of those volunteers were also serving at other sites in various strategic priority areas as a part of our right-sizing the program. We will continue to graduate stations and volunteers in the next three years. Basically, the thirty volunteers at the four stations we have in Community Priorities are among some of our oldest members who will be aging out in the next few years, so they will not be replaced. We will be encouraging anyone at those four stations to consider volunteering in our focus areas, especially those who are younger. Because of our gradual phasing out of certain volunteers and/or stations over time, there has been a minimum of disruption to our RSVP members. All have been educated about the Old RSVP versus the New RSVP with high expectations of service in the strategic priority areas. Our ultimate goal is to have 100% of our RSVP members serving in the areas of Education (with a focus on STEM-related academic engagement and early childhood literacy), Healthy Futures, and Veterans/Military Families initiatives which are where the majority of our community needs lie currently.

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

Our Primary Focus Area is Education. Since RSVP has been sponsored by the University of Maine Center on Aging, we have maintained a focus on school readiness around early childhood literacy. Formerly this was called the Born to Read program which came with our affiliation with the Maine Humanities Council. They provided volunteer and staff training, curriculum guides, and free quality literature for volunteers to read aloud to children at Head Starts and early childhood care centers (non-profits). This component of our work plan was developed with programming for impact guidelines, including measurable outcomes data obtained from a survey instrument completed by child care providers. We have maintained good relationships with the sites mentioned, and they continue to request volunteer readers. We now refer to the program as "Let's Read, Let's Grow".

Over the years the RSVP staff has noticed a high percentage of new RSVP members having college degrees and/or significant professional backgrounds in the STEM fields of science, technology, education, and mathematics. Many retired UMaine professors and salaried employees with STEM-

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related backgrounds are potential volunteers. In response to reports from our business community, state education system, and the university which have indicated the need for STEM education in the lower grades to further advance the economic opportunities for young people, this RSVP has created a K-6 grade STEM volunteer-driven program called "Roots for STEM". According to the Maine Vital Signs (2012) segment of the Change the Equation report, Maine business leaders have sounded the alarm that we are lagging behind in the STEM talent needed to stay competitive; female, low income, and minority students are lagging the farthest behind. Our program is designed to focus on math and science skills with highly trained volunteers working closely with students identified by classroom teachers who they believe will benefit the most from increased engagement in those areas. (ED27).

This RSVP is well-suited to respond to the demands for improving math and science skills, particularly in grades K-6. RSVP staff, a professional educator RSVP volunteer, and a steering committee are the driving forces behind establishing the STEM work plan and our pilot program for this fall. The RSVP program coordinator, with years of experience with placing volunteers in schools for the Foster Grandparent Program, has developed strong relationships with schools and other related programming with which we will partner. The RSVP director has a strong background in education and curriculum development which provides an additional layer of credentials for educational programming around academic engagement. In addition, her focus for many years was teaching/counseling at-risk youth, including migrants and Native Americans.

Also, we have the support of United Way of Eastern Maine to recruit early childhood literacy and STEM volunteers as a part of their ongoing Mentor/Tutor/Reader initiative. Our reporting to this funding source involves performance measures (shown in logic model format).

5. 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.

The current composition of our nine member Advisory Council consists of members with the following characteristics which they bring to the table:

- A. One is a former national administrator with CNCS.
- B. One is a former RSVP coordinator with VA connections.

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C. We have one representative from the business community.

D. We have one employed by a senior housing facility who has expertise in marketing.

E. The current chairperson is a long-time RSVP volunteer and former station supervisor who has leveraged volunteers for us in the past and continues to do so.

F. Two others are connected to area community organizations, of which one organization is specifically for older adults.

G. Three members have professional backgrounds in the field of education and have extensive experience volunteering with various organizations.

H. One member is a health outreach coordinator.

We are seeking new members who will represent two counties in our service area not currently represented. (Five members are or will be volunteering in Focus Areas this fall.) Meetings are held quarterly and subcommittees are created as needed and can meet separately. The group operates with a set of By-laws. Council responsibilities include:

1. Fundraising for a volunteer recognition event and general operating costs
2. Assist the RSVP staff with marketing efforts and to improve delivery of services. (RSVP staff provides regular program updates and financial reports.)
3. Availability to speak about RSVP at event booths or in media
4. Assist staff with recruiting new volunteers and stations
5. Gathering information from the service area to help with program and community needs assessments as needed
6. Assist with recognition events

In addition, some of our best collaborations with other agencies in our service area developed from connections initiated by members of our advisory group.

Since we are situated within a university system which manages multiple federal grant programs, complete compliance with federal regulations is expected at all times. In addition, we are fortunate to have a good relationship with our CNCS state compliance officer. The project director attends workshops on compliance issues offered by CNCS at trainings and conferences. This project has successfully passed monitoring visits done by a compliance officer including last year. If and when an issue arises, this project director is quick to act to resolve the situation for all parties involved, including informing the state program specialist.

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This program has been consistent in its diligence to maintain and update MOUs with new and old stations. Before volunteers are placed with a site, there must be a completed MOU on file. Our guide for the formatting of the MOU is based on the CNCS sample MOU. Copies of the MOU are kept in the station file and a copy signed by the RSVP director is sent back to the station for their recordkeeping. Sometimes we do add statements to the MOU as a result of our negotiating with the station if necessary as long as those statements are within the parameters of CNCS regulations; this is often checked out with our compliance officer prior to obtaining signatures.

At this point, the only eligibility requirement to serve in RSVP is to be age 55. Our volunteer registration form requests date of birth information which we verify by seeing a driver license or other photo ID. A project staff member indicates on the form that it has been seen and matches the provided date of birth for the volunteer. We also take additional precautions with our members who will be serving children by conducting a National Sex Offender check. State Bureau of Identification checks are also done by UMaine Human Resources on those same volunteers. Any other form of investigative check or requirements for volunteers beyond the two mentioned above will be done and paid for by the station. Each volunteer is provided with a Volunteer Handbook when they join RSVP which contains information regarding prohibited activities at a station as well as other pertinent membership information.

Organizational Capability

1. Infrastructure to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight and day-to-day operational support to ensure compliance with RSVP program requirements and to ensure accountability and efficient and effective use of available resources.

The University of Maine Center on Aging (UMCoA)) has extensive experience and widely acknowledged expertise in planning, implementing and administering older adult civic engagement and volunteer programs including: 1) administration of the state-wide Encore Leadership Corps (Encorps), a program for adults 50 years of age and older invested in preserving the environment of Maine that focuses on environmental stewardship, grassroots leadership, and community development, with a goal of giving participants the skills, knowledge and guidance they need to make positive changes in their communities (includes almost 300 members engaged in community revitalization projects in all 16 counties across the state); 2) the administration of a former state-wide

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AmeriCorps VISTA project focused on employment and financial literacy training of low income older adults; 3) the establishment of the Penobscot Valley Senior College, a life-long learning program for adults 50 years of age and over in central and Downeast Maine that is administered by older adult volunteers themselves (with a membership of 400 and more than 200 adults attending classes each semester); 4) the preparation of policy briefs and professional conference presentations on older adult civic engagement and leadership at local, regional, and national conferences as well as facilitation of older adult workshops on civic engagement for two Governor's conferences on aging and training workshops for volunteer managers throughout the state; and 5) leadership of the state association of Senior Corps Programs by the RSVP director.

UMCoA staff are experienced in the provision of fully compliant CNCS and RSVP programming and fiscal oversight. They and their colleagues in UM central administration have full familiarity with RSVP program requirements as evidenced by the sound performance and internal controls of UMaine as a RSVP sponsor over the past 12 years. The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs familiarity with a variety of federal grants and the OMB circulars further ensure accountability in grant management and oversight for RSVP at both the pre and post award stages.

The UMCoA director meets regularly with the RSVP program director to review RSVP operations, and the RSVP director is a member of the senior professional staff group within CoA who convene regularly to discuss and resolve any programmatic issues within UMCoA. Financial monitoring and personnel procedures and policies established by UM and in accord with federal and state policy guide all actions taken by UMCoA and RSVP staff. Comprehensive annual reviews of performance and resource utilization by all UMCoA programs and personnel are completed and reviewed by the Offices of the Vice President for Research and Human Resources.

The Center on Aging as an interdisciplinary research center conducts a comprehensive performance review and return on investment annually for UM and the Vice President for Research. This includes inventorying awards/honors received; events/workshops/conferences/seminars offered to the community; proposals prepared and funded; gifts received; publications; presentations to professional/lay audiences; professional and community service; organizational/professional association membership; technical coverage; media coverage; and staffing/student roster reviews. We set goals for the next year, identify challenges and solutions, and long-term priorities annually. Within

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CoA, senior staff meetings are held to discuss the review of project goals and objectives throughout the year. On a larger scale within the University of Maine, CoA must demonstrate and justify programming through regular discussion through the School of Social Work and the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture. Goals and objectives in each externally-funded initiative are reviewed at the conclusion of each grant; information gleaned from this process is utilized to guide future CoA grant searches. Taken together, RSVP is subject to multiple layers of review and evaluation.

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

Sponsoring agent, Lenard W. Kaye, D.S.W. /Ph.D., Center on Aging Director/Professor of Social Work, has widely acknowledged expertise in aging issues as well as student and older adult education and training, and gerontological research/evaluation. He sits or has sat on the boards and advisory councils of local, state, and national organizations which address senior issues (e.g., Eastern Area Agency on Aging, United Way of Eastern Maine Senior Council, Medical Care Development, and the Maine Gerontological Society). He is widely published, interviewed by the media, and frequently speaks on aging-related issues as well as on the civic engagement of seniors for healthy aging. He supervises the RSVP Program Director.

Paula Burnett, M.Ed., is the full-time Director for RSVP since 2006. Prior to that, she was the RSVP Coordinator for the Center on Aging since 2003. Formerly, she was employed by United Way as a Volunteer Services Coordinator (RSVP/United Volunteers). She has taught psychology courses for two colleges and was the Assistant Director of the Maine Educational Talent Search Program with the University of Maine. She is a member of the Maine Gerontological Society and the National Senior Service Corps of Maine. Over the years, her expertise in volunteer management has been sought by various non-profits and healthcare agencies. Paula also is a member of the Volunteers of America Community Advisory Council for Bangor. Her professional background in education, including school counseling, working with at-risk youth, and curriculum development, lends itself to further developing our primary focus area in Education. Lenard Kaye (Director of UMaine Center on Aging) in her recent performance evaluation stated, "Paula is an able and highly responsible professional who is extremely well-organized and timely in her performance of tasks and responsibilities. She is an

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excellent planner, sound thinker, and represents the Center quite well on all occasions. She values her supervisees, exhibits excellent patience and is invariably accessible. She is very knowledgeable of policies, procedures, and protocol as they pertain to funded programs." Finally, Paula completed the University of Maine Supervisory Leadership Institute in 2013.

Cindy Whitney is the program coordinator (36hrs.) She is a Certified Volunteer Administrator and has had over 20 years of experience with 11 of those years most recently with the Foster Grandparent Program. Previously, she worked with the Maine Air National Guard Family Services Program as their first Program Coordinator. Later, she was a RSVP director at the United Way of Eastern Maine. She frequently presents at the Blaine House Conference on Volunteerism (an annual conference sponsored by the Governor and the Maine Commission for Community Service); her most recent presentation was entitled Retaining Volunteers for Maximum Impact. Her educational background includes coursework in engineering as well as gerontology. With her connections to engineering and military programming, she will be an asset to further development of the STEM programming, as well as our veterans initiative. She obtained the international certification in volunteer administration (www.cvacert.org) in 2007 and continues to renew those credentials which include making presentations on topics related to volunteer management, e-learning self-study, providing consultancy to volunteer managers (station supervisors), mentoring colleagues, and other activities. She is currently in the process of completing Service Enterprise training (Points of Light Hands-on Network) and will become one of only two trainers for our region.

Kevin Dunton is our certified fitness instructor (independent contractor) who trains Bone Builders volunteer leaders. Kevin Dunton received his undergraduate degree from the University of Maine in Kinesiology. He is certified by the American Council on Exercise as a Personal Trainer with 10 years of experience. Kevin worked as the Assistant Fitness Director for the Bangor Y since 2002 as well as a Personal Trainer. Kevin is an Exercise Physiologist for Cardiac Wellness of Maine and is a part-time wellness coach for Wellness Coaches USA. With his expertise, we are ensuring quality training and support for volunteers as well as class participants while reducing risk liability.

Prudence Searl is the CoA Finance manager with over 35 years of finance-related experience. She reviews the general ledger on a weekly basis, assists with various purchasing duties, and initiates documentation required of UM purchasing, business, and payroll offices. Lenard Kaye has authorized

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her to be clerical support for the RSVP program as needed in the afore-mentioned areas.

3. Demonstrates organizational capacity to: Develop and implement 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.

As a designated interdisciplinary UM research center reporting to the Vice President for Research, CoA is able to assure adequate facility/equipment infrastructure, personnel/purchasing support, and associated policy support through immediate access to the specialized personnel, equipment, and capital resources of UM and the UM System. Internal and travel policies and staff responsibilities are maintained, regularly reviewed, and updated based on established policies published and monitored by the Office of Human Resources. CoA's affiliation with the UMaine School of Social Work and College of Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture provides additional avenues of access to marketing, public relations, technological, mailing, and purchasing services.

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

UMCoA, established in 2002 has, for the past 12 years, fully adhered to all financial management policies and procedures established and maintained by UM. CoA has its own full-time professional staff (Fiscal & Administrative Officer) and part-time support staff (Administrative Assistant II) dedicated to financial and budgetary grants management. For example, all RSVP purchases made with the UM credit card must be approved by the Fiscal & Administrative Officer. This in-house expertise is supplemented by the full participation of extensive budgetary/financial staffing in UM's Offices of Payroll, Human Resources, Benefits, and Research and Sponsored Programs. The director of the Office for Research and Sponsored Programs, Michael Hastings, with over 25 years of experience in grant management, oversees all RSVP and CoA-related pre- and post-award funding opportunities. CoA experience with federal grant funds includes projects funded through the CNCS, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Administration on Aging, the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the National Institutes of Health, the National Institute on Aging, and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, as well as grants received from state of Maine public agencies and a broad range of international, national and state

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foundations.

UMCoA has a record of successful management of RSVP for the past twelve years. In addition, CoA has sponsored several projects which serve to benefit seniors in various stages of their lives. All require CoA to document impact through funding source reporting. Funds managed since its inception approach ten million dollars. CoA manages annual budgets in the \$750,000 to \$1,500,000 range.

UMaine has recently declared aging research as an Emerging Area of Excellence with a special focus on productive aging and aging and thriving in place ensuring that the Center on Aging will be a core component of all future initiatives focuses on developing, specialized interdisciplinary research, education, service, and technical assistance expertise on aging related topics as well as beneficiary of future resource procurement. This bodes well for all UMCoA programs, including RSVP.

Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A