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Executive Summary

The primary focus area of the Erie County RSVP will be HEALTHY FUTURES. To accomplish the Healthy Futures objectives of Aging in Place, Food Security and Access to Care, 335 unduplicated RSVP volunteers will serve in nonprofit organizations throughout the City of Buffalo and Erie County. In all proposed Healthy Futures work plan areas, RSVP volunteers will serve older adults, homebound adults and individuals with disabilities, including veterans.

100 RSVP volunteers will deliver or serve meals to homebound adults through 3 Meals on Wheels programs. 100 RSVP volunteers will provide transportation services primarily for the purposes of medical appointments and grocery shopping through the DAV Van Transportation Network, Rural Transit Services, Inc., American Cancer Society's Road to Recover, Canopy of Neighbors, and Hearts and Hands. 7 RSVP volunteers will work in HIICAP (Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program), distributing information about health insurance, health care access and health benefits. 3 volunteers will provide information about services and benefits through 2-1-1 WNY and Springville Concord Elder Network. 16 volunteers will be trained as peer leaders to facilitate sessions of the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program and the Diabetes Self-Management Program to help individuals gain skills to better manage their disease and improve quality of life. 10 volunteers will provide social support to homebound adults through weekly phone calls as part of the Telephone Assurance Program, and 10 volunteers will provide socialization for dementia patients and respite for their caregivers through visits to their homes or assisting at adult day programs or the Memory Cafe.

A total of 50 unduplicated volunteers will work in area food pantries, sorting, stocking, inventorying, and distributing food items to individuals needing support to alleviate long-term hunger.

The expected outcomes of all RSVP service will be an increased number of older adults, homebound adults and individuals with disabilities reporting increased social ties/perceived social support and financial security, allowing them to live independently.

The federal funding level for this effort will be \$73,891 and the non-federal funding level will be \$94,130.

Strengthening Communities

Erie County is the largest metropolitan county in upstate New York with a population of 918,028 (US Census, 2012). Erie County is located in western New York, bordered to the west by Lake Erie and the Niagara River, and sharing an international border with Canada.

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Erie County has undeniable strengths, including our unique location on an international border and our natural resources such as the abundant fresh water of the Great Lakes. Buffalo is located about 25 miles south of Niagara Falls, one of the world's premier tourist attractions drawing more than 10 million visitors annually. Many architectural treasures exist in Buffalo, including the country's largest intact parks system designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. Erie County is working hard to build a diversified economy based on financial services, life science research and services, and green technology and computer equipment manufacturing. Governor Andrew Cuomo pledged Buffalo and Erie County with a \$1 billion multi-year economic development program to attract new industry. The University of Buffalo's two campuses in Buffalo and Amherst support more than 50 research centers. The Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus has more than one million patients and visitors annually.

At the same time, Erie County and the City of Buffalo face many of the problems that plague other "Rust Belt" communities. Upstate NY areas have grappled with the slow but steady loss of people - especially college-educated young people - to warmer and more bustling areas in the South and West. From its population of 580,000 people in 1950, the City of Buffalo lost more than half its population in 60 years. Suburban development has outpaced growth within the City itself, leaving increasing amounts of vacant land. While the central city and "first ring" suburbs have lost population in recent decades, the "outer ring" suburbs and rural communities have grown continually since 1950. One likely result of this population decline is loss of federal funds.

Buffalo is the third poorest city, behind only Detroit and Cleveland (US Census Bureau, 2009). The City of Buffalo's poverty rate is double that of Erie County, and low-wage jobs are pervasive (UB Regional Institute, 2010). Poverty statistics are most troubling in low-income minority communities, with significantly higher rates of school drop-out rates, unemployment, food insecurity, and disability and chronic disease.

RSVP will mobilize the rich skills and experiences of older active adults to address challenges that face many Erie County residents, focusing on social isolation among homebound and disabled adults, hunger and poverty, limited access to care and services, and low educational achievement. The Erie County RSVP has selected "Healthy Futures" as our primary focus area. RSVP will increase the number of RSVP volunteers serving in community partner organizations in agencies that provide services such as food, transportation, and social support programs that allow older adults to live independently, or provide respite for caregivers of homebound adults; agencies that provide emergency food for at-risk families; and agencies that provide information on health insurance and

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benefits, or health care education. Other focus areas for Erie County RSVP will include Education, Economic Opportunity, and Veterans and Military Families.

Primary Focus Area: Healthy Futures

Aging in Place:

Erie County's population is older than the national average. Almost 150,000 people, or 16.3% of the total population of Erie County is 65 or older, and 21,741 people, or 2.5%, were 85 and older (US Census, 2010). Many of the "oldest old" --especially women--live alone, are frail and survive on limited incomes. Older women are three times more likely to live alone compared to men. According to a recent study published in the Buffalo News (August 2014) households with people 60-years-old or older are now the fastest-growing segment of food stamp participants in Erie County, with a 61% increase in the number of households with older residents that receive food stamps since 2008.

The Erie County Department of Senior Services' "Project 2015" reported the following trends:

- * Erie County's population is aging. By 2015, almost 1 of every 4 residents will be age 60+.
- * The cohort aged 85+ is the fastest growing segment of the population.
- * 50% of all persons age 75+ have one or more disabilities.
- * Rapid growth is projected in the younger and older minority populations. Between 1980 and 2000, Erie County's minority elderly population grew by 70%.
- * The highest net out-migration occurred among young adults age 25- 35 and retirees age 60 -69.
- * The frail elderly tend to move back to Erie County for family and services.

Social Isolation and Aging: According to the World Health Organization (2002), social support has a strong protective effect on health by mitigating the effects of stress and even reducing medical visits. The 2012 Needs Assessment by the Erie County Dept. of Senior Services reported that 27% of those adults over age 60 who completed the needs assessment survey reported sometimes or frequently having problems getting adequate social interaction. An even greater number, 36% of respondents, reported the same for feeling lonely, isolated or depressed. The likelihood of reporting problems with loneliness and inadequate social interaction increased dramatically when combined with frailty and living alone. Risk factors for social isolation include disability, limited income, living alone, and lack of access to transportation. Lack of transportation consistently ranks among the highest reported needs among older adults in Erie County.

Services to support aging in place: The Erie County Dept. of Senior Services (the sponsor of Erie

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County RSVP) coordinates a network of services for older adults that directly or indirectly delivers services to support older adults to remain independent in the community and reduce social isolation. During the period August 2013 -- July 2014, 2593 adults age 60+ received home-delivered meals; 1845 received Going Places van transportation services; and 263 received friendly calls through the telephone assurance program (TAP).

Many nonprofit organizations providing transportation, home-delivered meals, caregiver respite, and friendly phone call for older adults rely on an army of volunteers as human resources to deliver the services. Older volunteers, including RSVP volunteers, have proved that they provide reliable, cost-effective, and compassionate service to recipients. RSVP volunteers not only deliver the service, but also provide a wellness check on the recipient and report any concerns to the supervisor. Through delivery of service, volunteers socialize with recipients and reduce their feelings of isolation.

RSVP volunteers in 3 home delivered meal programs will deliver a 2-meal packet and a brief period of socialization and a smile each day to homebound adults a few minutes of social contact --- often the only contact the recipient has that day.

RSVP volunteers in 5 transportation programs will drive, assist passengers, or dispatch. Volunteers will drive agency vehicles to transport older or disabled adults through the Rural Transit Services, Inc. program serving rural and suburban areas, and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Van Transportation Network to transport veterans to medical appointments at the VA Medical Center in Buffalo. Volunteers use their own vehicles to give rides to older adults through Canopy of Neighbors, a Villages model in the City of Buffalo, the faith-based Hearts and Hands in rural communities and now in the large suburban community of Amherst, and the American Cancer Society's Road to Recovery Program, which transports patients with cancer to treatment centers.

RSVP volunteers will make friendly phone calls to isolated older adults through the Telephone Assurance Program (TAP), or provide visits and light assistance through Canopy of Neighbors and Hearts and Hands. RSVP volunteers will provide respite for caregivers by visits or recreational activities with frail or dementia patients at home, adult day programs, or the Memory Café, in order to allow the caregiver some time away from their responsibilities.

RSVP will measure the impact of volunteers' activities on reducing social isolation among recipients of

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home-delivered meal programs, transportation programs, and social support and respite programs using The Independent Living Performance Measure Survey. The survey will be distributed to by RSVP volunteers, or by RSVP volunteer supervisors, to a sample of service recipients receiving home-delivered meals, transportation, or TAP calls. The surveys will be distributed with a self-addressed, stamped envelope which service recipients will return to the RSVP office. The Department of Senior Services will assist the RSVP staff with outcomes measurement by helping to collate and analyze survey results.

Access to Care

Buffalo and Erie County have higher overall mortality rates than NY State for lung cancer, breast cancer, and cerebro-vascular disease. Almost 60 percent of adults and children are obese or overweight, double the New York state average. The prevalence of self-reported diabetes among adults in NYS has increased steadily over the past 11 years, nearly doubling from 46% in 1996-1998 to 85% in 2007-2009. Diabetes is positively associated with minority status and low income, and with rates of obesity and sedentary lifestyle (NYS Dept. of Health, 2012).

Despite these troubling health statistics, Erie County residents may have difficulty finding health education programs to increase their ability to manage their diseases. The Erie County Commissioner of Health observed that "the CDC has multiple evidenced programs that can be implemented to address diet and exercise. Currently there is a lack of funding and dedicated staff to implement these programs locally and on a consistent basis" (Erie County Community Health Assessment, 2104-2017) Many low-income seniors also may not be aware of health insurance benefits, including assistance for which they are eligible. As a result, they may reduce their dosage, switch to a cheaper drug, or experience financial distress because of health care costs. Over two-thirds of eligible low-income seniors never heard of the Medicare Savings Programs, which helps people with limited income pay some or all of their premiums, deductibles and coinsurance. More than half had never heard of the Extra Help program for prescription drug costs. Only 13 percent had ever applied for either program, despite their eligibility.

RSVP volunteers will be trained as peer leaders in the Stanford model, evidenced-based Chronic Disease Self-Management Program and the Diabetes Self-Management Program. Volunteers will facilitate sessions where participants learn to apply skills in healthy eating and exercise, problem-solving, goal-setting, communication, etc. in order to better manage their chronic disease. Peer leaders will collect attendance and outcomes data using standard forms provided in the CDSMP. A

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copy of the attendance form will be forwarded to the RSVP office.

RSVP volunteers will serve as trained counselors for the Health Insurance and Information Counseling and Assistance Program to help older adults and their families better understand their health insurance options. RSVP volunteers will provide information and referral about community services to adults calling Olmsted Center/ 2-1-1 WNY and Springville Concord Elder Network. Volunteers will submit a monthly total of the unduplicated number of adults counseled.

Obesity and Food

Each month nearly 100,000 less fortunate Western New Yorkers turn to food pantries and other emergency food providers for assistance. A recent Hunger Study (Food Bank of WNY, 2010) reported that the number of people who are turning to emergency programs for assistance has increased at 82% of food pantries since 2006. 53% of households receiving emergency food assistance had to choose between paying for food and utilities. 34% of households had to choose between paying for food and rent or mortgage. In the past, families would typically visit food pantries once a month when their food stamps or food supplies ran out. In 2010, they came in much more frequently. At the same time that demand has risen, some companies that have donated to the Food Bank in the past have closed or moved out of the area, resulting in a steep drop in the pounds of food items donated.

RSVP volunteers will collect and deliver surplus food to food pantries through the Food Shuttle of WNY, an all-volunteer program that transports excess prepared and perishable food 7 days per week from super-markets, bakeries, and restaurants to food pantries and other agencies that serve individuals at risk of hunger. RSVP volunteers will stock shelves and assist guests at 7 food pantries and the Food Bank. The food pantry supervisors will report the total number of unduplicated families served each month, based on the days that RSVP volunteers served. The Food Shuttle will submit a quarterly report about the number of pounds of donated food transported by the RSVP volunteers.

Other Focus Areas

The Erie County RSVP will recruit and support volunteers in the Other Focus Areas of Education; Economic Opportunity, and Veterans and Military Families.

Veterans and Military Families

There are approximately 67,741 veterans living in Erie County (US Census, 2013). This number

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represents several different generations of veterans, from World War II to those who are serving or recently returned from deployments to the Middle East. Similar to national statistics, a significant number of veterans in Erie County struggle with physical challenges and mental health issues, unemployment, and homelessness.

RSVP volunteers will assist older veterans as part of service in the primary focus area, Healthy Futures, and in the other focus area Economic Opportunity.

Healthy Futures: Aging in Place:

RSVP volunteers at the Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) will provide veterans with van transportation to medical appointments through the DAV Van Transportation Network.

Volunteers will visit patients without social supports, including vigils with dying veterans. RSVP volunteers will assist with recreational activities in adult day programs and facilitate support groups.

Healthy Futures: Access to Care:

RSVP volunteers will counsel veterans about their eligibility for benefits through HII CAP. CDSMP and DSMP volunteers will lead sessions to provide veterans with skills to more effectively manage their chronic conditions.

Healthy Futures: Obesity and Food

RSVP volunteers will assist veterans who need emergency food at local food pantries.

Other Focus Area: Economic Opportunity

Adult Education and Literacy: RSVP volunteers at Gerard Place will provide tutoring for veterans preparing for the high school equivalency exam.

Housing: RSVP volunteers serving at Habitat for Humanity, Westside Ministries, and Project Hope will assist low-income veterans to gain access to safe, affordable housing. RSVP volunteers will assist homeless or at-risk veterans at the annual Veterans Stand Down and the Women Veterans Event, directing them to provider tables where they can find information about benefits and services. The events are coordinated by the Veterans One-Stop Center.

Recruitment and Development

Creating High Quality Volunteer Assignments

Erie County has an abundance of nonprofit and government organizations serving a variety of community needs. Over the 40+ years that Erie County RSVP has existed, we have developed a roster of 90 RSVP community partner organizations that have an excellent track record of providing high quality volunteer assignments and excellent supervision and support for volunteers. The current

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station roster includes organizations that address aging, literacy, education, environment, hunger and poverty, homelessness, cultural heritage, health care, and others. Stations range from large national organizations such as the VA Medical Center and the American Red Cross, to small faith-based organizations such as Response to Love Center and Operation Good Neighbor.

RSVP volunteer stations must meet several criteria to be accepted as an active RSVP volunteer station.

The organization must have a designated staff member who will serve as the liaison between RSVP and the organization. The organization must provide adequate support for volunteers, including volunteer screening, training, supervision and recognition. The organization must comply with RSVP's standards of non-discrimination, accessibility, and safety as defined in the RSVP Memorandum of Understanding. Most important, the station must offer volunteer assignments that are interesting, challenging, and fulfilling for the RSVP volunteers and help to address critical community needs.

The RSVP staff, in consultation with the RSVP Advisory Council, regularly reviews the roster of RSVP volunteer stations, and discusses the extent to which the roster represents the County's most critical needs, RSVP's priority areas of service, a wide range of volunteer opportunities to fit a variety of skills and interests, and access to RSVP volunteer service opportunities for individuals in living in different parts of the County, including urban, suburban, and rural areas. When a potential volunteer station is identified, the RSVP staff meets with the Executive Director or designated staff member to review the volunteer opportunities available at the site, including types of volunteer roles, safety of the setting, the skills and hours required, whether any background checks or other screening procedures, and whether the station gathers data on the impact of volunteer activities. The station must provide a written job description for each RSVP volunteer assignment. The station must agree to provide adequate support to the volunteers, such as training, supervision, and recognition, and be willing to track and submit volunteer hours and required impact data.

RSVP also offers volunteers the opportunity to take leadership roles in RSVP itself through membership on the RSVP Advisory Council. Members provide input into program development, policies and evaluation; planning and implementing volunteer recognition event; and community relations about RSVP through public speaking and media appearances.

During this three-year grant period, the RSVP staff and Advisory Council will focus on increasing the number of volunteers and opportunities that fall within our primary focus area, Healthy Futures (Aging in Place, Access to Care, and Obesity and Food), and within the Other Focus Areas (Education, Economic Opportunity and Veterans and Military Families). The Advisory Council has been

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constantly updated and consulted about the Corporation's Strategic Priorities, and has supported our efforts to focus volunteer recruitment and retention in these areas of service. The Council also has provided input and support when it is necessary to graduate volunteers and volunteer stations, such as volunteers serving in congregate meal programs, in order to conform to the Strategic Priorities.

Two recent initiatives by RSVP illustrate our mission to expand our menu of challenging and high quality opportunities that fall into the Focus Areas and meet critical community needs

First, when the Department of Senior Services became the local sponsor of the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) and Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP), RSVP was asked to take an active role in recruiting peer leaders to facilitate the sessions. The Department was eager to increase the number of volunteers trained as peer leaders in order to increase the number of CDSMP and DSMP held in communities throughout Erie County. This opportunity fits the criteria of a high quality opportunity in terms of skills, interest, support, training, and impact. Volunteers receive high quality training developed by Stanford for the volunteer peer leaders. and support from the Department of Senior Services in terms of program materials, scheduling, and marketing. The opportunity is challenging, and involves skills in public speaking/ teaching, and interest in health and wellness. proven to be very attractive to retired physicians and other health care professionals, teachers, and volunteers interested in wellness.

Second, RSVP worked for several years to establish an effective conduit to place volunteers in the Buffalo Public Schools (BPS), but barriers included lack of personnel, space, and infrastructure to identify good placements, provide tutoring areas, and supervise volunteers. Because the struggles of the BPS have been so much in the headlines, there is a great deal of awareness in the community about the situation and discussion about how the schools and student performance can be improved. When RSVP was able to establish a linkage to the BPS through the Closing the Gap program, RSVP then recruited and placed 15 volunteers in BPS classrooms beginning in January 2012. Volunteers include a significant number of retired teachers who have missed being in the classroom, and eagerly taken on the challenge of helping students to gain reading, math, or other academic skills.

RSVP's goal is to maximize each RSVP volunteer's satisfaction with the volunteer experience, and effectively tap the rich skills and experience of older volunteers to support work being done by nonprofit organizations. RSVP has been commended by our volunteers and volunteer stations for our success in matching potential volunteers' skills and interests with current needs at RSVP volunteer stations. Each new volunteer completes the RSVP enrollment form which includes a self-rating inventory of the volunteer's skills and areas of interest. After receiving the completed enrollment form,

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the Volunteer Coordinator interviews the new volunteer to get a more complete understanding of the kinds of volunteer opportunities that would be appealing and appropriate for the volunteer. New volunteers attend an orientation session where they learn more about RSVP opportunities, and discuss their own interests and listen to other volunteers.

RSVP maintains an updated database of volunteer opportunities using Volunteer Reporter software. The listing for each volunteer opportunity includes a job description with the location of the service, type of activities involved and the skills required. This enables RSVP staff to more efficiently match volunteers with opportunities in relation to their skills, interests, availability and geographic location. In order to assist potential volunteers with unique interests and high-level skills (such as grant writers, fund raisers, university professors, etc.) find an appropriate match, RSVP e-mails a profile of the potential volunteers' skills and interests to all volunteer stations, and requests stations to respond with any assignments that match the volunteers' skills. After a match is made, the RSVP Volunteer Coordinator follows up with the volunteer and volunteer supervisor a few weeks later to assess the satisfaction level of both.

Volunteer Training.

Newly enrolled RSVP volunteers must attend an orientation session led by the RSVP Volunteer Coordinator. These sessions are held about once per month at locations throughout the County. The Coordinator reviews RSVP volunteer opportunities, policies, procedures, benefits, and so on. All volunteers receive the RSVP Volunteer opportunities and the RSVP Volunteer Handbook with information about RSVP's mission, history and funding; RSVP transportation reimbursement policy; confidentiality; attendance; CIMA insurance coverage; how to submit volunteer hours, etc. Volunteers sign a form that they have received, reviewed, and understand the information in the packet. Once an RSVP volunteer is placed at a volunteer station, that station is responsible for providing all training related to agency policies and procedures, including safety and emergency procedures, reporting procedures, etc. RSVP requires that RSVP volunteer stations to provide all training and supervision required for volunteers to safely and effectively carry out assigned activities. Healthy Futures/ Aging in Place. Volunteers in home-delivered meal programs will attend initial and ongoing trainings regarding the organization's mission, the volunteer's job description, schedule of arriving at the site and loading meals into the vehicle, proper handling of hot and cold trays, conducting a brief wellness check and socialization, what to do in case a recipient does not respond or appears ill, and more. New volunteer drivers in transportation programs similarly receive training on

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how to safely assist passengers, how to handle difficult passengers, emergency procedures, weather cancellations, etc. TAP volunteers receive training in how to establish an appropriate and supportive relationship with the client, confidentiality, identifying and reporting client concerns, and other issues.

Healthy Futures/ Obesity and Food. Volunteers in food pantries receive training from food pantry staff about the organization's mission, job description, policies and procedures related to actual food distribution (such as the number of bags/ food items allowed based on the number in the family), any required documentation, safe lifting and food handling, confidentiality, and treatment of clients with respect and dignity.

Healthy Futures/Access to Care. Volunteers in CDSMP and DSMP programs attend a training made up of 4 full days, based on the Stanford evidence-based model. The training is led by two facilitators who have completed the required modules to be certified as Master Trainers. Volunteers receive the Peer Leaders' manual with the curriculum including templates for charts and the Healthy Living book. The entire curriculum is reviewed, and volunteer peer leaders are given the chance to practice leading sessions in front of other trainees. HII CAP volunteers receive extensive training from HII CAP staff and other professionals from programs such as EPIC or Social Security regarding benefits, eligibility, using the Medicare website, etc. HII CAP staff is always available to volunteers who may need more information to respond to clients' questions.

Education. RSVP holds an annual orientation only for volunteers who will serve in the schools. The orientation introduces volunteers to the role of Closing the Gap and Say Yes Buffalo, the special concerns of Buffalo Public School students, and the policies and procedures required of volunteers working with young students, as a vulnerable population. An experienced RSVP volunteer and Closing the Gap/Say Yes representative share experiences and answer questions.

Economic Opportunity. Volunteers building or rehabilitating houses through Habitat for Humanity or Westside Ministries will receive training and on-site supervision, to ensure safety safe procedures during construction activities. Volunteers tutoring adults who are preparing to take the high school equivalency exam will receive training from the GED supervisor to effectively tutor students to move through the graded curriculum.

Recruiting a Diverse Pool of Volunteers

As RSVP works to align our volunteer assignments more closely with the Corporation's Strategic Priorities, we have shifted from our traditional matchmaker role (offering a diverse range of

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opportunities), to an increased focus on finding volunteers for assignments related to the Primary Focus Area of Healthy Futures, and the other focus areas of Education, Economic Opportunity, and Veterans and Military Families. Consequently, we have made changes to reflect these priorities in the station roster and RSVP recruitment materials and strategies. RSVP's Advisory Council approved a marketing plan to focus on one priority service area each month (i.e, literacy transportation, environmental awareness, poverty and hunger, senior fitness, etc.) During the month, RSVP will post articles about volunteers and volunteer opportunities in that area of service, and also send these articles to local newspapers and other media.

The RSVP Opportunities Listing of volunteer stations and assignments is now divided by Focus Area, with a description of the community need (for example, the low test scores and graduation rates in the Buffalo Public Schools), a listing of available volunteer assignments (classroom tutor), and relevant volunteer stations. The Listing is mailed to all potential volunteers who contact the RSVP office and distributed at all displays and recruitment events. The listing appears on the RSVP website (www.erie.gov/rsvp).

The monthly RSVP Spotlight list features new or one-time volunteer opportunities is distributed at all University Express classes, sent to all potential volunteers, displayed at all events, and posted on the RSVP website.

Mass e-mails are sent to a growing distribution list of volunteers interested in time-limited and diverse volunteer opportunities. Many new retirees are reluctant to make a regular commitment of time to a specific organization, and so prefer a variety of opportunities with flexible scheduling. The volunteers can choose to respond to the notices, or simply delete them. Through these experiences, volunteers may discover an affinity for an agency and make a bigger commitment of time to that agency.

The RSVP University Express lifelong learning program is entering its seventh year of providing free academic classes taught by volunteer instructors for audiences age 55 and older. University Express is both a high quality volunteer opportunity for highly skilled professionals who enjoy teaching adult audiences and a recruitment vehicle for potential RSVP volunteers. Classes are offered at 8 sites throughout the County, and attract thousands of older adults. RSVP staff or Advisory Council members give a brief introduction about RSVP volunteer opportunities, distribute the Spotlight list to audience members, and invite audience members to add their e-mail addresses to our distribution list. The program gained the sponsorship of Blue Cross Blue Shield in Spring 2014, which expanded outreach about RSVP and University Express to Blue Cross Blue Shield subscribers over age 55. RSVP also regularly promotes our volunteer opportunities through display events, presentations at

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meetings of civic groups or retirees, media appearances, and press releases to community newspapers. Our local public broadcast station, which is an RSVP volunteer station, provides us the opportunity to have a brief interview on the air during pledge drives that are staffed by RSVP volunteers. The RSVP newsletter is now combined with the newsletter of the Erie County Department of Senior Services, and sent to almost 20,000 older adults in Erie County.

In addition to targeting recruitment for volunteers in our new focus areas, RSVP continues to work to increase diversity among RSVP volunteers. According to the US Census (2012), Erie County's ethnic makeup was 81.1 percent White, 13.9 percent Black, 5.7 percent Hispanic, and 2.7 percent Asian, compared to Buffalo's racial makeup of 50.4 percent White, 38.6 percent Black, 10.5 percent Hispanic, and 3.2 percent Asian (including a significant number of new refugees from Burma). Buffalo's poverty rate is double that of Erie County. The Hispanic demographic category has the highest rate of poverty with 37.2 percent of the population in 2000 living in poverty.

The ethnic and racial make-up of the current pool of RSVP volunteers is 91 percent white, 2 percent Black, 1 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent Asian and 1 percent American Indian. (Three percent of volunteers did not indicate their race or ethnicity.) Since Erie County RSVP's inception in 1972, the overwhelming majority of RSVP volunteers have been white and suburban. There has been a slight increase in the number of African American RSVP volunteers in the past 10 years. Although economic data is not collected, it appears that most volunteers would consider themselves to be from middle-class blue collar and white collar families.

RSVP has been working to engage more volunteers from the African-American and Hispanic communities in Buffalo, but progress has been slow. RSVP's Advisory Council hosted a forum several years ago on Diversity and Volunteering. We learned from panel members about differences in attitudes and definitions about volunteering. For example, several older African-American women said that they were more likely to volunteer through their churches or to help elderly neighbors on their streets than get involved in formal volunteer opportunities at nonprofit organizations.

RSVP's Advisory Council members have strongly voiced the need for diversity among Council members. Our Council roster includes an Asian woman who is a retiree of the University of Buffalo, an African-American woman who is the President of the "We Care" Block Club, a grassroots organization of minority residents from Buffalo's East Side and West Side, and an African-American man who is a supervisor for the Closing the Gap program. He formerly served as a supervisor for the Buffalo AmeriCorps. The Council membership also includes diversity in sexual orientation, with two members who are active in gay rights organizations.

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The We Care Block Club President is a strong advocate for engaging young and older individuals in low-income neighborhoods in activities that help neighbors and strengthen pride in community. She tirelessly organizes volunteer opportunities such as planting community gardens, rehabilitating and painting deteriorating houses for owners who are too ill or poor to pay for repairs, or hosting community events about health or environmental issues. The RSVP Director volunteers for the Block Club's events, and serves on the Senior Board for the Block Club. The We Care Block Club President and RSVP Director encourages the members over age 55 to join RSVP and try new volunteer opportunities. We Care members assisted in a tree planting with RSVP members, and attended RSVP Tribute Day.

RSVP has ensured that volunteer opportunities exist in all geographic areas of Erie County, including sites located in low-income neighborhoods in the City of Buffalo and rural areas. However, we still have a distance to go in order to establish a volunteer pool that truly represents the diversity of the Erie County population. We will increase RSVP's presence in inviting all members of the community to get involved in volunteering, involving RSVP Advisory Council members to act as spokespersons. We also will increase the number of press releases in newspapers serving the African American and Hispanic communities. RSVP has many volunteers who are veterans, especially at sites with "veterans helping veterans" such as the VA Medical Center and the Buffalo and Erie County Naval Park.

RSVP strives to find appropriate and fulfilling assignments for older adults with physical and mental health disabilities that are adapted to their unique needs. One recent successful placement was a gentleman who is legally blind as a classroom assistant to work with refugees learning the English language in a refugee services organization. Volunteers are asked to list any limitations on their enrollment forms, and have reported arthritis, COPD, and even amputations that may limit their mobility, ability to stand for long periods or to lift. We also have served volunteers who are dealing with mental health challenges such as severe depression.

VOLUNTEER RETENTION

RSVP orientations provide a face-to-face opportunity to introduce new volunteers to RSVP staff, opportunities, benefits, policies and procedures. RSVP will provide all volunteers with a Volunteer Handbook, describing RSVP policies and procedures, benefits, hours and travel reimbursement submission, etc.

To increase the percentage of initial contacts resulting in successful matches, RSVP staff will follow-up 1 month after initial placement to determine whether the match was successful for the volunteer and

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the volunteer station. RSVP staff will follow-up with volunteers who have not submitted hours for 3 months or more to determine whether they are still volunteering, want to continue enrollment in RSVP, or would be interested in a different placement.

RSVP effectively keeps in touch with volunteers through mass e-mailings, newsletters, and our Facebook page. The Volunteer coordinator regularly posts updates and photos to highlight RSVP volunteer activities. RSVP staff have been commended for effectively responding to phone calls and e-mails from volunteers and volunteer supervisors who have concerns or questions.

RSVP recognizes that after a volunteer is placed, the volunteer's primary identity is the Volunteer Station, so that it is important for RSVP to maintain a close relationship with the Volunteer Station and Supervisor. Because there is relatively high turnover among volunteer supervisors, new volunteer supervisors are often unaware of RSVP policies and procedures, or even which volunteers at the station are enrolled in RSVP. RSVP staff conducts an annual refresher supervisors' refresher training to update new and veteran supervisor about our policies and procedures, and how RSVP can help to recruit high quality volunteers.

In order to increase ease of submitting volunteer hours to RSVP, we offer volunteers and supervisors 3 options for submitting hours and transportation reimbursement requests: internet submission through the Web Assistant; e-mailing; and paper timesheets. We have steadily increased the number of supervisors using the Web Assistant, and focused on this during the 2014 Supervisors Training. This reduces paper, and is extremely efficient for entry of hours into the Volunteer Reporter database. In addition, the supervisors and volunteers can view their own history of hours, in order to check for accuracy.

Recognition

For 39 years, the Tribute Day recognition event offered a full meal, entertainment, gifts, and door prizes for any RSVP volunteer who provides 40+ hours of service per year. This event was eagerly anticipated, and attended by approximately 700 people. After the 20 percent budget cut in April 2011, the Advisory Council planned a streamlined event with a much smaller budget. Our first "new format" recognition event was a very successful afternoon at the Buffalo Zoo in 2012. In 2013, the event was held at the Buffalo Museum of Science with admission to all exhibits including "Body Worlds". The theme was Volunteer Vitality, which was reflected not only in the message of Body Worlds, but also in the Wellness screenings and displays (bone density, blood pressure readings, healthy eating and exercise consultations, etc.) and the healthy menu featuring wraps made by

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students from a high school culinary program, and apples donated by a local orchard. The 2014 recognition event will be held at the Buffalo History Museum, with refreshments, admission to all exhibits, raffles, a special presentation on Main Street Buffalo in 1910, a Tai Chi demonstration and tour of the Japanese gardens, and even a sing-a-long featuring "Buffalo Gals" and "Shuffle off to Buffalo". The volunteers will take chances on gift baskets and gift cards.

Fundraising to support the recognition event includes ad space in the program booklet, donations of gift baskets by volunteer stations and donations of refreshments from local businesses.

The response has been very positive because these events offer many things to do, places to walk or sit, and a chance to enjoy one of our own volunteer sites.

The RSVP program will order Presidential Service Awards for those volunteers who achieve the Lifetime service award (although funds will not permit continued purchase of the other award levels). These volunteers will be invited to an intimate luncheon hosted by hospitality students at Erie Community College. The "Stories of Service" link on the RSVP website will feature interviews with this year's Lifetime awardees.

RSVP will post stories of service in our pages in the Dept. of Senior Services "Connects" newsletter, RSVP website, and media releases.

Program Management

Ensuring that RSVP Volunteer Stations comply with RSVP program regulations.

When an organization expresses interest in becoming an RSVP volunteer station, the RSVP Director will meet with the Executive Director or designated staff member to ensure that an interested organization meets the criteria to serve as a volunteer station, including that the organization is a public or non-profit organization (secular or faith-based) or an eligible proprietary health care agency; the organization has the necessary infrastructure to provide adequate training, supervision, and placement of RSVP volunteers; and the organization will assign volunteers safe and meaningful assignments that meet identified community needs and that fit RSVP's priority areas of service.

The RSVP Director prepares and reviews the Memorandum of Understanding with the Executive Director of the proposed volunteer station, or person designated by the Executive Director. If it is determined that the organization meets the criteria for an RSVP volunteer station, then the RSVP Director and the Executive Director or designated staff member will sign the MOU. The MOU is renegotiated every 3 years for all RSVP volunteer stations. The Memorandum of Understanding defines the volunteer station's responsibilities as follows:

ASSIGNMENT: Develop volunteer assignments that impact critical human and social

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needs and regularly assess those assignments for continued appropriateness.

INTERVIEW: Interview and make final decision on assignment of volunteers. If a volunteer is not an appropriate referral, contact the RSVP program.

ORIENTATION: Implement orientation, in-service instruction, job descriptions or special training of volunteers. If required by the organization, ensure that the volunteer has appropriate background check, physical examination or proof of immunization, or other screenings prior to service at the organization.

SUPERVISION: Provide supervision of volunteers on assignments.

REPORTS: Collect and validate appropriate volunteer reports for submission to RSVP office on a monthly basis or as requested.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES: The Volunteer Station will not request or assign RSVP volunteers to conduct or engage in religious, sectarian, political/election activities including transportation to polls or labor/ anti-labor organizations.

DISPLACEMENT OF EMPLOYEES: The Volunteer Station will not assign RSVP volunteers to any assignment which would displace employed workers or impair existing contracts for services.

COMPENSATION: RSVP Stations shall not request or receive any compensation from RSVP volunteers or from beneficiaries for services of RSVP volunteers. In addition, a Senior Corps volunteer does not receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardian, or family members or friends.

TERMINATION: Regardless of the cause of termination of an assignment, the discussions of individual separations will occur among RSVP staff, Volunteer Station staff, and the volunteer to clarify the reasons, resolve conflicts or take remedial action. RSVP staff will find placement with another volunteer station, as appropriate.

APPLICABLE CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS AND REGULATIONS AND

NONDISCRIMINATION CLAUSE: Provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities (including mobility, hearing, vision, mental and cognitive impairments or addictions and diseases) to participate in programs and activities.

11. **ACCIDENTS AND ANNUAL SAFETY ASSESSMENT:** Provide for adequate safety of volunteers; investigate and report any accidents and injuries involving RSVP volunteers immediately to the RSVP office. All reports will be in writing and/or e-mail. Safety assessments will be completed annually.

12. **SUPPLIES:** Volunteers will be furnished with materials required for their assignment.

13. **NON-DISCRIMINATION:** Station assures it will not discriminate against RSVP volunteers or

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in the operation of its program on the basis of race; color; age; sex; sexual orientation; national origin, including individuals with limited English proficiency; political affiliation; religion; or on the basis of disability.

Each volunteer station must designate a staff member who is responsible for day-to-day oversight of RSVP volunteers within the volunteer station and for assessing the impact of volunteers in addressing community needs. The staff member will ensure that the organization provides assigned RSVP volunteers with adequate training, supervision, safety, etc. The staff member is responsible for communicating to the RSVP office about RSVP volunteer assignments, including job description, and for collecting, validating, and reporting RSVP volunteer hours to the RSVP office.

Because there is relatively high turnover among volunteer supervisors, new volunteer supervisors often are unaware of RSVP policies and procedures, or even which volunteers at the station are enrolled in RSVP. RSVP staff conducts an annual supervisor's refresher training to update new and veteran supervisors. At the refresher training, the RSVP staff covers the history, mission and funding of RSVP, RSVP policies and procedures, RSVP volunteer opportunities RSVP volunteer benefits such as excess insurance, reporting of volunteer hours, transportation reimbursement requests, and performance measurement data, the Corporation's strategic priorities, and so on. The Memorandum of Understanding is distributed as a handout and reviewed to reinforce the responsibilities of the volunteer station and supervisor.

Ensuring that RSVP Volunteers are Performing Assigned Service Activities

Erie County RSVP uses Volunteer Reporter to manage volunteer demographic information, volunteer hours, job descriptions, and impact data. Volunteer stations provide RSVP timesheets to all assigned RSVP volunteers, and then submit these hours monthly. The RSVP Director e-mails a reminder to all supervisors on the last day of the month that it is time to submit volunteer hours. Supervisors are encouraged to submit these through the Web Assistant, with instructions as to how to do this. Many volunteers in impact assignments also track number of meals delivered, children tutored, TAP calls made, etc. on their timesheets. Hours and impact data are entered monthly by RSVP staff or Advisory Council member into the Volunteer Reporter.

Each active RSVP volunteer must have a written job description for each assignment. Each volunteer station is required to submit a job description for any RSVP volunteers assigned to that volunteer station. The RSVP Director reviews the job description to ensure that it meets acceptable guidelines for RSVP volunteer assignments. The approved job description is entered into the RSVP Volunteer Reporter database.

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Upon initial placement of a volunteer, the RSVP Volunteer Coordinator makes a follow-up phone call within one month to assess the status of the placement, the volunteer's satisfaction with the placement, and the volunteer supervisor's assessment of the volunteer's performance in the assignment and satisfaction with the placement. If there are concerns, the Coordinator offers assistance to resolve the situation, including the possibility of a change in assignment.

When hours or transportation reimbursement is submitted, these hours are only for the approved volunteer assignment that appears as the volunteer's placement in the database. Erie County RSVP uses Volunteer Reporter to manage volunteer demographic information, volunteer hours, job descriptions, and impact data. Volunteer stations provide RSVP timesheets to all assigned RSVP volunteers, and then submit these hours monthly. The RSVP Director e-mails a reminder to all supervisors on the last day of the month that it is time to submit volunteer hours. Supervisors are encouraged to submit these through the Web Assistant, with instructions as to how to do this. Many volunteers in impact assignments also track number of meals delivered, children tutored, TAP calls made, etc. on their timesheets. Hours and impact data are entered monthly by RSVP staff or Advisory Council member into the Volunteer Reporter.

RSVP staff maintains frequent communication with RSVP Volunteers and Volunteer Stations via e-mail, phone, and site visits. The Volunteer Coordinator contacts Volunteer Stations supervisors at least monthly to request information about current volunteer needs. The RSVP Director communicates with RSVP volunteers and volunteer stations at least monthly to remind them to submit volunteer hours, and to provide information and reminders about RSVP policies and procedures, and other news or issues impacting RSVP and RSVP volunteers.

The RSVP Advisory Council conducts the required program evaluation during each grant cycle to assess the extent to which RSVP is meeting its mission of placing RSVP volunteers in assignments that are fulfilling and meet critical community needs. The Advisory Council surveys all RSVP volunteer stations and volunteers about their understanding of RSVP policies and procedures, volunteers' satisfaction with their volunteer station and assignment, etc. RSVP Advisory Council members review the results and follow up with any supervisors or volunteers who indicate concerns or questions on the survey.

Changing Community Needs and Graduating Volunteer Stations

The Erie County RSVP has existed since 1972. In the early decades, some of the primary assignments were congregate meal assistants, volunteers who helped to collate mailings for large organizations, knitters and sewers, library assistants, and hospital volunteers. These older volunteers tended to stay

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in one organization for many years. However, when the Boomers began to retire, these new volunteers were looking for different types of opportunities, particularly those that related to service that had a clear impact on a community need, was challenging, and flexible. Nonprofit organizations changed. Fewer needed assistance with large mailings. Libraries became digitalized. The Erie County RSVP, with input from the RSVP Advisory Council, began to seek out nonprofit organizations that offered challenging opportunities for these "new" senior volunteers, and that were working in the forefront of meeting community needs identified by our sponsor, the Erie County Dept. of Senior Services, as well as other organizations such as the United Way, such as gaps in educational success, unemployment, hunger, and older adults who were struggling to remain independent in the community.

The RSVP Advisory Council and RSVP Staff review the roster of volunteer stations at least annually, and consider nonprofit organizations interested in becoming an RSVP volunteer station. In accordance with the CNCS Strategic Plan and the Serve America Act of 2009, there was a decision made in 2010 to graduate volunteers and volunteer stations that primarily provided assistance with congregate meals, because this assignment no longer matched CNCS Focus areas for volunteer assignments.

In order to preserve the dignity of these long-serving volunteers, as well as good relations with the congregate meal sites, the RSVP Director personally called each congregate meal sites as well as the Dept. of Senior Services director of nutrition services for the County. The Director explained the change in focus of the RSVP program, and thanked the station supervisor for the years of participating in the program. The RSVP Director sent a letter to the site director with the names of the RSVP volunteers currently assigned to that site. Then the RSVP office sent a letter to each RSVP volunteer with a current assignment as a congregate meal assistant. The letter thanked the volunteer for their dedicated service, and explained that although the volunteer was encouraged to continue volunteering at the congregate meal site, their service would no longer be designated an RSVP volunteer assignment. The letter assured the volunteer that their volunteer service was valuable to the participants they service, but due to a re-focusing of national services programs, this assignment no longer fell with the scope of RSVP. The RSVP Director briefly described the focus areas of RSVP, and invited them to consider volunteering in one of these areas in addition to their service at the congregate meal site. The RSVP Director informed the site supervisors when the letter to the volunteers was sent, and offered to speak to the volunteers at their site if they had any questions. Although there was some confusion and disappointment among the volunteers (particularly because

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their hours no longer were counted toward the annual Tribute Day recognition event) , the sites did not report that they lost volunteers.

RSVP Volunteers in Services related to Healthy Futures. The Erie County RSVP has a long partnership with well-respected organizations in all 3 areas of the Healthy Futures focus area. We have recruited and placed hundreds of volunteers for decades in home-delivered meal programs, transportation programs, food pantries, and HIICAP. Since CNCS required the reporting of performance measurements, RSVP has developed tools and collected outcomes data in each of these areas. For the past four years, we have administered a survey of food pantry recipients using the template developed by the New York State Senior Corps Association. The RSVP staff contacts the food pantry liaison to set a date for the survey administration. The RSVP staff brings surveys and pens to the food pantry on that date. The food pantry staff or volunteers announce the survey and that participation is completely voluntary. The RSVP staff offer assistance with completing the survey and a free pen to each recipient who completes the survey. Our community partners are aware that RSVP is required to collect and submit outcomes measurements based upon the MOU, and that RSVP requests the partner organization's assistance with this process. Partner organizations in the Healthy Futures focus area have shared available outcomes data with RSVP that reflects volunteer activity the survey of transportation recipients that is conducted on a biannual basis by the volunteer station Rural Transit Services, a client satisfaction survey that is completed quarterly by Catholic Charities TAP program, and a research project conducted by Meals on Wheels for WNY dieticians on to assess the impact of home-delivered meals on recipients' nutritional status.

Ensuring that RSVP is in Compliance with Federal Regulations

The Erie County RSVP is proud that our RSVP Advisory Council has been recognized as a "best practice" during a recent compliance visit. The RSVP Advisory Council includes up to 20 RSVP volunteers, volunteer supervisors, and community leaders who meet monthly to provide input and guidance to the RSVP staff about program directions, policies and procedures, volunteer recruitment and recognition, etc. The RSVP Advisory Council also assists with the program evaluation, resource development, and planning and implementing the Annual Tribute Day event.

Signed RSVP MOU with all Volunteer Stations: RSVP requires all new volunteer stations to sign an MOU. This is updated every 3 years or more often if there is a significant change to the organization or RSVP. The date of the most recent MOU is entered in the Volunteer Station profile on the Volunteer Reporter database. This is reviewed at least annually and appears on the Station Roster.

Ensuring that all volunteers are eligible to serve in RSVP. Each RSVP volunteer must complete and

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sign the RSVP Enrollment form prior to approval as an RSVP volunteer. The enrollment form includes information on birthdate (to ensure that the volunteer is age 55 or older), drivers license and automobile insurance for volunteers who will drive to their assignments, self-disclosure of felony, consent to sex offender check, etc. The RSVP volunteer Coordinator completes the national sex offender check and makes a copy of any findings. The Volunteer Coordinator completes the Enrollment Checklist to indicate that the volunteer has signed and provided documentation on the following: Enrollment form, signed and dated; veterans status; copy of license; copy of automobile insurance card; emergency contact information; date of RSVP orientation; and signed handbook acknowledgement form.

Organizational Capability

The Erie County Dept. of Senior Services (ECDSS) has successfully managed RSVP for 42 years since its inception in Erie County. As the Area Agency on Aging, the ECDSS provides a wide range of direct and subcontracted services for over 27,000 seniors per year. The County, as the AAA, subcontracts and monitors the impact of volunteers who serve through the Health Insurance Information and Counseling Assistance Program (HIIICAP), the Telephone Assurance Program (TAP), Meals on Wheels, and Long-term Care Ombudsmen. The NYS Office for the Aging conducts an Annual Assessment of the Department to identify accomplishments and weaknesses. ECDSS has demonstrated its strong fiscal commitment to the national service program for older adults by providing a match of over 100 percent, with no decrease in matching funds even when the RSVP federal funding was cut by 20 percent. ECDSS provides necessary office space, copying and printing support, fiscal oversight, and technology support as required by RSVP staff. The County Attorney's office is available to the Department to provide legal assistance to department programs with regard to County operations, including all legal matters related to such operations and compliance with applicable federal, state and local laws.

Staff Positions

Patricia Dowling, RSVP Director, has been the RSVP Director for 11 years. She has an MS in Human Development, with an emphasis in Adult Development and Aging) from the Pennsylvania State University. She began her career in volunteer management as a VISTA member, and held administrative positions in a number of aging services and volunteer services, including two Corporation-funded programs (Senior Companion Program and Learn & Serve). She was an instructor at a local two-year college for undergraduate assistants in gerontology, many of whom were returning, nontraditional students. Drawing upon her experiences as an instructor and a Learn

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and Serve coordinator, Pat initiated and organized the successful University Express lifelong learning program for adults who are age 55+. In accordance with the Department of Senior Services' increased priority on evidence-based programs, Pat completed training in 2012 and 2013 as a peer leader, and now as a Master Trainer for the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) and the Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP). This qualifies her to train RSVP volunteers as peer leaders for both programs.

Carrie Smith has been the RSVP Coordinator of Volunteer Training and Development for 4 years. She has a B.A. in Performance from Buffalo State College. Prior to coming to RSVP, she was an AmeriCorps member for 2 years, and then an AmeriCorps staff for 3 years. During this time, she developed skills volunteer leadership, including supervising a team of volunteers in the Hurricane Katrina aftermath in New Orleans, and an army of volunteers for the Extreme Makeover project here in Buffalo. In recognition of her leadership skills and dedication to service, she received the National Service Award, presented by Hillary Clinton in Washington, DC. Carrie also brings strong experience in volunteer recruitment, training, supervision, and recognition. In 2013, the Volunteer Administrators of WNY recognized Carrie with the prestigious Gretchen Stringer Award for her initiative and creativity as reflected in outstanding volunteer recruitment strategies, trainings for volunteers and volunteer managers, and RSVP's successful new format for volunteer recognition events held at venues such as the Buffalo Zoo and the Museum of Science.

Randall Hoak previously supervised the RSVP grant, but in 2013 was named as Commissioner of the Dept. of Senior Services. Randy has 12 years of experience working in aging services. He received a degree in Psychology with a minor in Gerontology from Canisius College in Buffalo, NY. The RSVP contract is now managed by Anthony Gregorczyk, who also supervises the Department's fiscal staff including those who provide support for RSVP. Anthony Gregorczyk is an accountant with 26 years in Erie County government. Barbara Krause, Senior Accounting Clerk, is responsible for all paperwork for vouchering Federal funds, payment of program expenses, projections for the RSVP budget, and audit of paperwork for volunteer transportation reimbursement. The RSVP office receives about 4 hours per week of data entry/ clerical assistance from other Department staff members.

Policies and Procedures. RSVP's day-to-day operations must comply with operating procedures of Erie County. For example, purchasing for RSVP is done through the County's purchase order department and monitored by fiscal staff. Quarterly transportation reimbursement for RSVP volunteers is done according to a procedure with checks and balances. The RSVP staff enters mileage and bus fare into a spreadsheet which automatically calculates the reimbursement for the quarter.

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The quarterly statement summarizing volunteer names, addresses, Social Security numbers, and reimbursement amounts is e-mailed for review to the Department fiscal officer. The Senior Accounting Clerk then performs a random check of several volunteer files to ensure accuracy and adequate documentation for the reimbursement request. When this audit is complete, the fiscal officer then forwards it to the Erie County Comptroller's office. The County Comptroller's office writes the checks, and manages the account and reconciliation.

***Organization's financial management systems and past experience managing federal grant funds. The Erie County Department of Senior Services (ECDSS) has been in continuous existence since 1971. The current operating budget is over 16 million dollars. The Department of Senior Services manages 25 grants and provides a broad range of home and community-based services with multiple sub-services. ECDSS is the Area Aging on Aging for Erie County, and has received, monitored, and reported on Older Americans Act funding for over 25 years. The Department of Senior Services manages 25 grants and provides a broad range of home and community-based services with multiple sub-services. Erie County Dept. of Senior Services, the Erie County Budget office and Controllers office uses SAP, and internationally accepted ERP. The legal entity, the County of Erie, undergoes an annual single audit.

As the Area Agency on Aging, the ECDSS provides a wide range of direct and subcontracted services for over 27,000 seniors per year. The County subcontracts and monitors volunteer programs such as the Telephone Assurance Program, which coordinates volunteers, primarily seniors, who telephone homebound clients to provide socialization and check on well-being, and the Long-term Care Ombudsman Program. The Department continually assesses outcomes of case management clients. ECDSS participates in the US Administration on Aging's (AOA) Performance Outcomes Measures Project (POMP), to assess the quality of services provided to older New Yorkers and their caregivers, and to estimate cost savings associated with home and community based services in assisting older people to delay or avoid nursing home placement.

Other

NA

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

NA