

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

United Way of Lane County (UWLC) respectfully submits this competitive application for sponsorship of the Senior Corps RSVP program in Lane County, Oregon and requests \$71,171 to be supplemented by United Way's non-federal amount and other in-kind contributions totaling \$33,232. UWLC improves lives through the caring power of communities and recruits people and organizations that bring the passion, expertise and resources needed to get things done. An estimated 451 RSVP volunteers will serve to strengthen United Way's work in Education: improving academic performance through school programs and early learning, Economic Opportunity: providing financial literacy and money management services, and Healthy Futures: supporting individual health needs including access to care and aging in place. RSVP volunteers will specifically focus in the area of Healthy Futures which includes the Senior & Disabled Services Senior Meals Program, allowing older adults and individuals with disabilities to live independently. At the end of the three year grant, over 450,000 meals will be delivered to more than 1250 individuals and over 600 clients will receive health benefit programs in conjunction with congregate nutrition sites. UWLC is a proven community leader with nearly 70 years of dedicated service and has sponsored RSVP since January 2003.

## Strengthening Communities

Community health in Lane County, Oregon faces serious issues including food insecurity and limited access to health care. Using data from a myriad of sources, Lane County has published a Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan ([www.preventionlane.org/chip](http://www.preventionlane.org/chip)). This effort illustrates the need for community intervention and support through the work of RSVP volunteers.

Embedded in this overall picture of health in Lane County is the knowledge that without the provision to fulfill basic needs, such as access to healthy food, any improvement in overall community health would be a challenge. To that end, we know that 1 in 4 people in Oregon are currently served by Medicaid; this estimate is also true for Lane County. Social determinants of health (those conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age) have significant impact on health. In Lane County, 16% of county residents have inadequate support of services and 40% have housing costs that absorb more than 30% of their income (source: County Health Rankings). In addition, FOOD for Lane County resources states that, 1 in 3 residents are eligible for food assistance.

UWLC has established community strategies to address these issues, including increasing the number of people with access to primary care; increasing the number of people participating in chronic disease

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management programs; and increasing access -including transportation- to health care in rural parts of the county. In addition to these strategies, the engagement of community partners such as hospitals and clinics to improve connectivity and community member navigation is critical.

More specifically, RSVP volunteers will provide an important safety net for people at risk of food insecurity, isolation and those facing the decision to enter nursing homes, a costly option. Through the Lane County Council of Governments Senior & Disabled Services Senior Meals and ElderHelp programs, RSVP volunteers provide transportation, home-delivered meals and nutrition counseling to help individuals remain at home. Researchers at Brown University found that locations that invest in home and community-based services, especially home-delivered meals, have fewer low-care residents in nursing homes.

RSVP Volunteers will deliver healthy meals for the Meals on Wheels program and provide educational resources for better nutrition at eleven Café 60 congregate nutrition sites. RSVP volunteers also serve as ElderHelp volunteers providing companionship, transportation for shopping and errands, reading, correspondence, and respite care.

UWLC will ensure National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs are measured, collected and managed by collecting data from RSVP stations identified in the various work plans. The program will collect survey data in league with Senior & Disabled Services for the Meals on Wheels and ElderHelp programs on results of homebound individuals who report the level of social ties and support they have received. Stations that provide access to care will submit annual reports which include the number of clients served. The RSVP manager will compile the information and evaluate the progress and effectiveness of RSVP volunteer efforts.

There are 32,059 veterans in Lane County, totaling 11% of the population. Veterans receive direct access to care and resources through RSVP volunteer work in tax preparation, meal delivery and clinical support. While current RSVP stations do not track the number of veterans served, their services are accessible to all community members, veterans included. Currently, the closest VA hospital is an hour away in Roseburg, Oregon. However, a new veteran's clinic -the Eugene Health Care Center- is scheduled to open spring of 2015. The facility will include a mental health lab, pharmacy, surgical, and diagnostic units. UWLC is committed to pursuing a partnership with the new clinic. RSVP volunteers will provide essential support, helping ensure that Lane County veterans have access to healthcare.

### **Recruitment and Development**

RSVP has been active in Lane County since 1987 with UWLC sponsoring the program since 2003.

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UWLC believes that the RSVP program strengthens organization efforts to build a corps of volunteers that address identified community needs, develops the leadership of senior volunteers and acknowledges individuals in creative and rewarding ways. RSVP of Lane County continues to offer one-on-one placement for each volunteer, maintains ongoing contact with members, and consistently develops station relationships.

UWLC strives to provide a high quality experience every time an RSVP member is placed. Members are interviewed prior to placement and a two-hour RSVP orientation is offered to all new members. Staff is dedicated to matching the volunteer with opportunities that fit their lifestyle, areas of interest, skills, schedule and abilities. After the initial interview, station volunteer coordinators are contacted to provide a smooth entry into a volunteer position. RSVP provides a clear direction and purpose for individuals to serve.

In addition to an initial orientation and placement interview, RSVP volunteers receive orientation and trainings from their assigned station. Each RSVP station is required through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to "implement orientation, in-service instruction or special training of volunteers".

The demographic picture of Lane County, according to the 2013 Census Bureau report, has a population of 356,212 with an ethnic breakdown of: 90.3% White, 1.1% Black or African American, 1.4% American Indian and Alaska Native, 2.8% Asian, and 8.0% Hispanic or Latino (4.2% of the population categorize themselves as having two or more races). Individuals over 65 years old represent 16.8% of the population and 11% of the population are veterans. Only 27.5% of the population has a Bachelor's Degree and the median annual income per household is \$42,628. There are 18.8% residents in Lane County who live below the poverty level. UWLC recruits volunteers who reflect the demographics of the county and RSVP volunteers are represented in rural, costal and metro areas having varied socioeconomic backgrounds.

RSVP recruits volunteers at gatherings such as Senior Day at the Lane County Fair, the PERS Health Fair, Senior Center events and other occasions provided to boomers and beyond. The program manager co-leads volunteer recruitment workshops four to five times a year with the Senior Companion Program Manger through Lane Community College. Workshops are offered at area senior centers and the public library. Oregon is one of the most attractive states in the US for active retirees. This allows for a more diverse retired population that lends itself to building a strong program with an increased pool of potential volunteers. Recruitment is also done through online opportunity listings and in the regional newspaper. UWLC maintains an online database of local volunteer

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opportunities. United Way staff and community volunteer coordinators collaboratively advertise the database as a resource for potential volunteers. Opportunities at RSVP stations are specifically highlighted, attracting seniors to pursue volunteerism through the RSVP program.

Recruitment goals for 2015 to 2018 include an overall increase by more than 50 RSVP volunteers. These new volunteers will primarily serve in the Education Focus Area due to UWLC involvement with the states 40-40-20 goal. RSVP volunteers will support school readiness by partnering with SMART and HeadStart Pre-K programs as well as work in the K-12 Success by volunteering at Fairfield and Malabon Elementary Schools After School Programs which were initiated in part by UWLC AmeriCorps VISTAS. The VISTA grant is approaching its third year, and RSVP volunteers will provide continuity through the transition.

Oregon's Governor established a Regional Achievement Collaborative as part of the states 40/40/20 education goal; his vision is to provide a seamless education system from birth through college. The 40-40-20 goal represents having 40 percent of the state's adults with four-year college degrees, 40 percent with two-year degrees or the equivalent, and the remaining 20 percent with high school degrees. The Oregon Education Investment Board launched a pilot program to help meet key student outcomes such as getting children ready for kindergarten, creating opportunities for high school students to earn college credit, and ensuring smooth transitions into career and college. Lane County was selected as one of eleven regions to participate in Regional Achievement Collaborative, where they will work together to improve outcomes across the educational continuum and overall educational quality throughout the region.

Lane County RSVP volunteers report through an annual station survey that they feel engaged and appreciated within their appointments, resulting in a high retention rate. UWLC assures communication with RSVP volunteers through quarterly newsletters, emails and holiday thank you letters. Volunteers are recognized during an annual RSVP picnic with food, desert, entertainment and a thank you presentation.

The local newspaper, The Register Guard, partners with UWLC and ten local businesses to recognize community volunteers. This is a unique partnership allows the program to show gratitude and recognize RSVP volunteers and stations. Each month, a selection committee comprised of representatives from the 10 companies, selects outstanding volunteers in six categories. The committee receives nominations from non-profit agencies across Lane County. Volunteer honorees are featured in a full page article and receive an invitation to attend the community's annual volunteer recognition event where the Volunteer of the Year is announced. During the event, RSVP

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volunteers who serve 500 hours or more are recognized and presented with the Presidential Service Award.

### Program Management

UWLC ensures station compliance through effective management of the RSVP program. A signed MOU stating program regulations is required of each active station. Station responsibilities are clearly stated and reviewed in person by the station coordinator and RSVP Manager. Volunteer stations are surveyed annually and randomly contacted to assure that volunteers are performing their duties as intended and to assess the need for additional volunteers. The latest survey resulted in a 50% return, with station coordinators stating they felt satisfied or very satisfied with the RSVP volunteers referred to them. Of those station coordinators who responded, 84% said RSVP volunteers are instrumental in improving, expanding or sustaining service to clients. More individual follow-up will take place in the future to ensure a higher survey return.

Eligible volunteers are informed at their initial interview and at scheduled orientation that UWLC is their advocate and they should contact the program immediately should any questions or issues arise. Station volunteer coordinators report volunteer hours on a monthly bases and indicate that the hours reported have been performed in the assigned service activity. An e-newsletter is published quarterly and sent to volunteers and station coordinators highlighting individuals, stations and informing both of any requirement or program change.

In preparation for this Strategic Plan, the program effectively restructured stations by graduating those that were no longer reporting hours or had few or no active volunteers. Volunteer coordinators of these stations were informed verbally and by mail. While some stations closed others have opened to better align with the new priorities.

UWLC has worked to provide access to health care to Lane County families and individuals through the 100% Access Healthcare Coalition since 2004. The Coalition is comprised of Lane County's leading health care providers including hospitals, medical practitioners, safety net clinics, insurers, government agencies, private businesses and non-profit organizations who are committed to improving access to health care in Lane County. The Coalition works to connect people in Lane County with no or inadequate medical insurance to existing health resources. It works to refine current health delivery system as well as develop and implement new community-based medical programs and services to fill the most needed gaps. RSVP volunteers have augmented the work of the 100% Access Healthcare Coalition by providing delivery of meals to homebound individuals since 1999. This past year over 210,000 meals were delivered to individuals through two RSVP stations.

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UWLC has a history of tracking outputs, including the number of meals delivered.

An RSVP Advisory Council has been established and includes people who are knowledgeable of community needs, work in the field of volunteerism and serve as administrators of similar programs. Newest members of the council are Director of the Successful Aging Institute and Senior Companion Program, Barbara Susman, and Sandy Karsten, Senior & Disabled Services Senior Meals Manager.

### Organizational Capability

The programs day-to-day operation is administered by Manager, Amy Bresler. Amy brings over thirty years of experience in the non-profit field. She has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Oregon. As a former Executive Director, Development and Marketing Director Amy has a thorough understanding of volunteerism, supervision, program management and public awareness. She currently serves as a member of the Senior & Disabled Services Advisory Council and the Oregon Money Management Program Advisory Board for Lane County Council of Governments. An active member of the community, Amy also sits on the Housing Corporation Board for Alpha Kappa Chapter of Alpha Chi Omega at the University of Oregon and is a SMART (Start Making A Reader Today) volunteer.

Program Assistant, Rachel Edson, serves as administrative support to the program. Her duties include the collection of volunteer hours, data entry, file maintenance, strengthening relationships with stations and community outreach. She serves part-time (50%) as the UWLC Volunteer Program Specialist. She facilitates volunteer activities for area business partners and organizes annual Day of Action and Day of Caring events. She serves as lead organizer to the areas Volunteer Coordinators Alliance. Rachel has a degree in Psychology from the University of Oregon and served as a UWLC Loaned Executive in 2013.

Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administration, Cathi McNutt, will serve as the program's Authorized Representative, program administrator, supervisor and financial manager. Cathi comes with nineteen years of professional experience as a registered Certified Public Accountant. As a partner with a local CPA firm Cathi's practice focused in audit, accounting and consulting. She worked with large financial institutions, non-profit and governmental entities and served on the firms Quality Control Committee. Cathi is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Oregon Society of Certified Public Accountants. Cathi is responsible for the financial management and safeguarding of UWLC assets. She works closely with the CEO, Board of Directors and the Internal Operations Committee to maintain and strategically improve internal organizational systems that support UWLC's overall operations. In addition to primary responsibility for the financial

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systems, Cathi provides supervision and oversight for human resources, benefits administration, risk management, as well as information technology and facilities. Cathi serves as a key member of UWLC's Staff Leaders Team and directs the accounting and administrative staff as they support all departments and functions.

Financial management procedures are well established as are Personnel Policies. UWLC is experienced in the management of federal grants. A team of volunteer professionals serve on an Internal Operations Committee, providing operating and budgetary oversight and guidance. The accounting is done on an accrual basis and UWLC follows regularly accepted accounting principles. UWLC converted from Quickbooks to Intacct software on June 30, 2014.

UWLC is financially stable and able to provide the resources needed to support RSVP of Lane County ongoing. UWLC provides program supervision including administrative assistance, fiscal management, HR, marketing/design, reception, and IT support. The UWLC website includes an RSVP page to recruit and inform potential volunteers as well as direct station volunteer coordinators to list volunteer opportunities on the website's volunteer program. UWLC covers rental and utilities costs, including electricity, heat, water and other operational expenses.

### **Other**

n/a

### **PNS Amendment (if applicable)**

none