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Executive Summary

The Megiddo Dream Station in Graniteville, South Carolina serves individuals in Aiken, Barnwell and Edgefield Counties. The Megiddo Dream Station RSVP Project will serve these counties.

An estimated 320 RSVP volunteers will serve. Some of their activities will include job and personal skill training, financial literacy classes, income tax preparation and GED preparation. The primary focus area of this project is Economic Opportunity.

At the end of the three-year grant, 300 economically disadvantaged individuals will complete Work for Success programs, which includes job and personal skill training as well as financial literacy classes. 120 participants will get income tax support and 120 participants will be served through GED prep groups.

The CNCS federal investment of \$80,757 will be supplemented by \$8973 from local sources.

Strengthening Communities

The Megiddo Dream Station is in Graniteville, South Carolina less than a mile from the location of the nation's deadliest rail accident involving toxins. In 2005, Graniteville was the home of Avondale Mills which employed thousands until the toxic chlorine that was released that night killed nine people, injured hundreds and caused the mills to close their operations. Graniteville and the surrounding communities have never recovered. Mill workers had lived on meager salaries and many had dropped out of school to work in the mills like generations before them. The struggling economy could not support the placement of these displaced workers and many turned to government and community assistance to meet their day to day needs. Months became years and statistics from the 2010 census shows that the unemployment rate in Graniteville is 12.4%, well above the state rate of 9.3% and the national rate of 7.9%. The Graniteville poverty rate is 33.7% compared to a state rate of 17.5% and less than 15% national rate. The per capita income of Graniteville is \$14,672, which is much lower than the state average of \$23,906 and the national average of \$28,051. Perhaps even more telling is the median household income for ages 25-44, which is \$26,146- far below the state average of \$48,181 and national average of \$57,132. The median household income for <25 is \$11,909 compared to a state average of \$23,327 and a national average of \$26,465.

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The loss of one of the largest employers in the area impacted Aiken, Edgefield and Barnwell Counties. The greatest need in the area is economic opportunity: housing, employment and financial literacy.

Housing is a major issue because so many workers lost their jobs without any type of warning and without an opportunity to plan. Many people lost their homes and moved into rental homes. As unemployment benefits ran out, people got behind on their rent and eventually found themselves to be homeless for varying periods of time. RSVP volunteers will assist people who are homeless or home-insecure to find affordable housing. Megiddo will invest in mill houses and vacant lots that are available. RSVP volunteers will work on building and renovation projects to provide safe, affordable housing to people who are economically disadvantaged. The desired housing output is to increase the number of economically disadvantaged individuals who receive housing services. The desired housing outcome is to make a positive impact on the number of economically disadvantaged individuals who transition into safe, healthy, affordable housing. Volunteers will track outputs by tracking all individuals who receive services and follow up on the outcome in an activity log which will be saved to the Megiddo Dream Station ONEDRIVE online. Outcomes will be recorded on the ONEDRIVE when volunteers receive a copy of proof of residency. This may be a deed, rental agreement or utility bill.

Employment and skill training are necessary to transition people back into the workforce. Many of the individuals to be served have little or no math, English and computer skills. GED preparation classes are needed for people who did not complete high school. Individuals will be taught how to conduct a successful job search--- with resume and cover letter writing support, on the job training and mock interviews. RSVP volunteers will teach job skills and basic adult education classes. Volunteers will also conduct mock interviews and review resumes, giving appropriate feedback to increase individuals chance for a successful job search. RSVP volunteers will develop relationships with local employers, encouraging employers to participate in training program and to offer positions to participants in the program. The output for the employment area is to increase the the number of economically disadvantaged individuals receiving job training and other skill development services. The desired outcome is to increase the the number of economically disadvantaged individuals who are placed in jobs. Attendance logs are taken at all classes and recorded on the Megiddo Dream Station ONEDRIVE to track outputs. To track outcomes, program records are stored on ONEDRIVE;

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Megiddo tracks individuals by contacting employers at employment and every 3 months to follow retention.

Financial literacy is a key component for self-sufficiency. Individuals need to learn how to budget their money, how to improve their credit rating, how to save money and how to prepare their taxes. Through Megiddo's partnership with Security Federal Bank, RSVP volunteers will provide income tax tutoring and financial literacy classes. The desired output is to increase the number of economically disadvantaged individuals receiving financial literacy services. To track output, attendance Log at all financial literacy classes and income tax tutoring classes will be recorded and tracked on ONEDRIVE.

In addition to the primary National Performance area of economic opportunities, the Megiddo Dream Station RSVP project will address food insecurity issues. RSVP volunteers will assist in food distribution, food collection and nutrition education through the Hungry No More monthly food box program, as well as the afterschool and summer food programs. With 25% of our children in this area at-risk for hunger, volunteers will make an incredible impact on the community-- ensuring that these children grow up without the long-term effects of poor nutrition. Proper nutrition will result in better performance in school and in sports. Children will be healthier on a day-to-day basis. Attitudes and behaviors will improve.

Veterans, as well as active military personnel, and their families will be encouraged to participate in all areas of the project-- both as participants and as RSVP volunteers. Megiddo has a strong relationship with the Aiken Warrior Project and the local National Guard unit.

Recruitment and Development

The Megiddo Dream Station RSVP volunteers will be recruited through announcements on local radio stations, during community events, at Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Sertoma, veteran organizations, other civic clubs and churches meetings throughout Aiken, Edgefield and Barnwell counties. In addition, announcements will be made through church/club newsletters, through social media outlets, various local media outlets and community calendars.

Announcements will invite potential volunteers to four Volunteer Open Houses at the USC Aiken VIP Conference Center. People who attend will get information about the RSVP project. Potential volunteers will be screen for eligibility in the RSVP program. Volunteers can indicate specific interest

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and upload resumes on the project website. Appropriate volunteers will be invited to corresponding training sessions. Attempts will be made to connect all interested individuals to activities. Special efforts will be made to provide access to training information to people with disabilities.

One day orientations will be conducted quarterly. All volunteers will be required to attend orientations. The orientation day will begin with a two hour general orientation session, which will provide information about the project, the need, the performance measures, outcomes and outputs, station locations, volunteer benefits, volunteer positions and the record keeping requirements. The general orientation will be conducted by the Executive Director and the Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteers will be given an opportunity to briefly share background information and areas of interest.

On the same day after the general orientation session, volunteers will attend a luncheon and will be given a chance to meet other volunteers. After lunch, volunteers will be divided into service areas based on their experience, education and interest. Area specific training will be provided by previously established volunteers to explain the activities that will be conducted, to determine how each person will share their expertise and to assign individuals to specific stations and assignments. Policy and procedure manuals will be presented to ensure all volunteers are providing consistent, effective services to people in the community; however, volunteers will share feedback and expertise during sessions to provide more detailed policies and procedures to be distributed before the first day of work. Volunteers with construction, renovation, public housing and real estate experience/training will be assigned to the HOUSING area. Retired school teachers, trainers and adult educators will be assigned to the EMPLOYMENT area. CPAs, financial planners, tax professionals and bookkeepers will be assigned to the FINANCIAL LITERACY area. Nutritionists, gardeners, food service staff, logistic professionals, drivers and food pantry volunteers will be assigned to the OBESITY AND FOOD area. Volunteers who do not have education, training or life experience in a particular area will chose an area of interest and will be assigned to a team with individuals with experience.

The 2010 U.S. Census statistics for Edgefield, Aiken and Barnwell counties indicate that 15.2% of the residents are veterans, 25.4 % over 21 have a disability, 93.8 % speak English only, 52.1% are female, 68.1% are white, 25.4% are African American and 5.1% are Hispanic. In an effort to have RSVP volunteer statistics that reflect the community, recruitment strategies will target organizations, media outlets and community programs that will increase awareness opportunities for all people.

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As new volunteers are recruited quarterly, current volunteers will be asked to join the group at a luncheon to share their experiences and to encourage new volunteers. Current volunteers will be recognized for their service at these quarterly meetings and after serving for one full quarter, volunteers will receive a volunteer t-shirt.

Volunteers may be asked to attend additional training sessions or meetings as needed to ensure quality outcomes.

At the annual dinner, volunteers will be recognized and thanked for their service. A thank you will be posted on the project website, as well as on social media platforms.

Program Management

The volunteer coordinator will be responsible for managing the volunteer stations to ensure that RSVP program regulations are being followed. Staff and volunteers will be trained to avoid prohibited activities. Basic station rules will include:

- 1) Neither volunteers nor staff will conduct activities that may influence the outcome of any election to public office, the passage or defeat of legislation or any voter registration activity.
- 2) RSVP volunteers will not replace an employed individual nor do the activities otherwise done by a paid employee.
- 3) Neither volunteers nor volunteer stations can receive compensation for the work done by volunteers.
- 4) Volunteers will not be required to pay a fee to volunteer.
- 5) RSVP volunteers will not give religious instruction, conduct worship services or engage in any form of proselytization as part of their duties.

In addition, project staff positions are not and will not be related by blood or marriage to other project staff, Megiddo staff or members of the Megiddo's Board of Directors. The Megiddo Dream Station will not discriminate against a RSVP volunteer on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, or political affiliation, or on the basis of disability, if the volunteer with a disability is qualified to serve.

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Megiddo recognizes that some of the volunteer stations have multiple programs and many needs. Station supervisors will be given the task of making work assignments each day and ensuring volunteers are performing the RSVP approved assignments and service activities. In addition, the Volunteer Coordinator will make a minimal of one announced and one unannounced visit each month to each volunteer station. Our corrective action plan policy follows:

Megiddo Dream Station RSVP Volunteer Station Corrective Action Policy

The volunteer coordinator and station supervisors are instructed to refer to volunteer handbooks and their in-service training materials when questions or problems arise. If problems are observed at a station, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The Station Supervisor and Volunteer Coordinator will be notified immediately.
2. The Station Supervisor will initiate the corrective procedures.
3. The Volunteer Coordinator will visit the station, observe and review the station. He may also retrain the station supervisor and/or demonstrate the corrective action needed.
4. A written record of the problem and corrective action taken will be kept in the station folder.
5. The Volunteer Coordinator will make an unannounced visit within two weeks to assess compliance.
6. If the corrective action is unsuccessful, the Megiddo Dream Station Executive Director will be notified. The Executive Director, Volunteer Coordinator, Station Supervisor and, if appropriate, pertinent volunteers will discuss the need for corrective action and an action plan will be developed.
7. The Volunteer Coordinator will make an unannounced visit within two weeks. If corrective action is unsuccessful, recommendations may be made to remove a specific non-compliant volunteer, assign a new station supervisor to the station or to move that volunteer station for the following year.
6. Stations that have poor participation, with problems that can't be corrected, or where there is a failure to meet program requirements, will be moved. Every effort will be made to ensure RSVP volunteers and program participants will not be inconvenienced by the move; however, non-compliance cannot be tolerated.

Megiddo Dream Station seeks to address changing community needs quickly and effectively with minimal disruption to participants and volunteers. Megiddo used the following criteria when choosing volunteer stations:

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- 1) Proximity to public transportation
- 2) Proximity to public housing
- 3) Adequate space to allow for substantial growth
- 4) Safe environment
- 5) Organization that welcomes the general public and will attract diverse participants and volunteers.
- 6) Building in good repair with minimal possibility of interruption of services due to disrepair.

Megiddo has identified at least one additional potential site in each of the communities we serve, in case there is a need to move unexpectedly.

The Megiddo Dream Station currently provides employment and financial literacy training. Each participant is tracked from the time they begin classes through three years after graduation from the program. Tracking parameters include: Training attendance records, job placement, job retention, job promotion, placement in housing in secure tenure and participation in financial literacy program.

Megiddo has established an Advisory Board who will serve as the RSVP Advisory Council. The Advisory Board is comprised of five business owners and three upper level managers in businesses employing participants in the Megiddo Dream Station training program, an attorney, the local economic development CEO and a pastor. The Megiddo Dream Station Executive Director is responsible for serving as a liaison between the RSVP program and the RSVP Advisory Council. The Volunteer Coordinator will attend meeting but will not be a voting member.

The Volunteer Coordinator will ensure that Megiddo has the required MOU for all RSVP volunteer stations. All MOU agreements must be approved by the Advisory Council prior to start-up.

The Volunteer Coordinator will ensure all volunteers are eligible to serve in RSVP. A personal identification and a resume will be required for all volunteers. If a potential volunteer meets the age requirements but does not have a resume, the Megiddo Job Search Coordinator will assist them to develop one.

Organizational Capability

The day-to day operational staff positions for the Megiddo Dream Station RSVP Project are Volunteer Coordinator (40hrs/week), Administrative Assistant (20 hrs/week) and Bookkeeper (10 hrs/week).

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In addition, the Megiddo Dream Station Executive Director will provide administrative, financial and organizational oversight, as well as training during orientation and as needed. The Executive Director will work closely with the Volunteer Coordinator to produce an effective Orientation Program and Volunteer Handbook. Kay Benitez, the Executive Director, has managed over \$3 million in federal grants while working with Golden Harvest Food Bank and USC Aiken. Ms. Benitez and the RSVP Advisory Board will develop and implement policies and procedures to manage risk and capital assets.

The Volunteer Coordinator will provide direct supervision to the volunteer station supervisors at each station, will review all documentation of outcomes and services, will monitor each station and follow-up on corrective action plans, and will purchase equipment and supplies as detailed in the budget. In addition to collecting, scanning and filing paperwork and receipts, the Administrative Assistant will schedule trainings, monitoring visits and volunteer placements. The bookkeeper will enter all financial information in the RSVP account in QuickBooks, will record all donations (including in-kind), will compare all expenditures with budget, will pay any outstanding bills/invoices and will provide detailed financial reports to the Executive Director and RSVP Advisory Board.

Alex Cavanaugh will serve as the Volunteer Coordinator. Mr. Cavanaugh has served as a Volunteer Coordinator for Christ Central, a local non-profit, managing over 80 active volunteers. Mr. Cavanaugh has served as the Snap2Work Coordinator for Megiddo Dream Station and has developed strong networks throughout the area. Mr. Cavanaugh has managed federal and state grants. He has worked with a strict budget and multiple employment stations. Mr. Cavanaugh has also helped with the Megiddo Financial Literacy program and our Transitional Housing program. The transition to Volunteer Coordinator will be an efficient one and will allow him to use his skills working with volunteers.

Sharon Kelley will serve as the RSVP Administrative Assistant. Mrs. Kelley has over 30 years of office experience and has served as the part-time Volunteer Coordinator at Megiddo Dream Station. She is very detail oriented, efficient and meticulous. Her organizational skills coupled with Mr. Cavanaugh's supervisory experience will provide a stable, effective leadership for RSVP volunteers.

Donna Hines will serve as the Bookkeeper. Donna has over 20 years of experience as an accountant UPS and Midland Valley Church of the Nazarene School. She has managed federal, state and local grants at each location. She will write policies and procedures to ensure financial records are handled appropriately. Her attention to financial details and understanding of QuickBooks will ensure

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financial records are easy to understand and properly maintained. All financial records will be reviewed by the Executive Director and the Megiddo Dream Station Treasurer, CPA Cindy Meares. Mrs. Meares will audit all financial records and report to appropriate boards to ensure compliance with all RSVP and federal guidelines.

The Executive Director, Megiddo Executive Board and the RSVP Advisory Board will work diligently to ensure compliance program-wide.

Other

All required documents have been sent in.

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A