

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

United Way of Porter County is a nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation, serving Northwest Indiana for 57 years. Our mission is to lead, unite and inspire the community to improve lives. We are proposing to recruit, train and place 170 RSVP volunteers in Porter County Indiana. For the fiscal year 4/1/15 - 3/31/16 we are requesting \$45,126. The CNCS federal investment of \$45,126 will be supplemented by \$5,014.00, a 10% match. Our primary focus area will be Healthy Futures with the objective on Aging in Place. We will specifically focus on transportation, food delivery, and companionship. Our other community priorities will be Education, Veterans and Military Families, Economic Opportunity and Disaster Services. Within our other community needs, we will be focusing on K-12 success, financial literacy, services to support veterans and military families, and disaster assistance through training and outreach. We will also be placing volunteers in the Capacity Building focus area at our RSVP stations, as well as CNCS supported organizations. These volunteers will assist with recruitment and training of volunteers as well as garnering donations and food pantry support/collections. We will use surveys, standardized testing, attendance and engagement in after-school activities, number of veterans accessing care and community services, number of volunteers trained in disaster preparedness, and number of federal and state income taxes filed and refunds received. We anticipate 2,000 older adults and persons with disabilities will receive nutritious meals on a daily basis, 250 older adults will increase their social ties in the community, 500 veterans and their families will receive services, 500 income tax forms will be filed, 500 students will improve their oral reading fluency and read at grade level, and 75 disaster kits will be assemble and 75 community members will be trained in disaster preparedness by the end of our 3-year grant cycle.

## Strengthening Communities

RSVP volunteers will strengthen the community of Porter County by providing service activities in the primary focus area of Healthy Futures: Aging in Place as well as the community needs of: Education, Veterans and Military Families, Economic Opportunity, Disaster Services and Capacity Building. The geographic area served covers Porter County Indiana.

The total population of Porter County is 166,557, with 2.5% of Hoosiers living in one of Porter County's 8 towns/cities. Porter County has seen their minority population grow 3% in the past two years. There are currently 13,828 veterans living in Porter County, which is 2% of all veterans in the state of Indiana. The closest Veteran Outpatient Clinic (Adam Benjamin Veteran Clinic) and Vet Center is located in Lake County, one county over. Due to our county's proximity to Chicago, Veteran

## Narratives

residents of Porter County also have access, but limited transportation, to the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center. (Source STATS Indiana, U.S. Census)

Porter County spans 418.1 square miles in Northwest Indiana. Seventy Nine percent of that area is urban. The other 21% is made up of farmland or rural communities. (Source U.S. Census)

The NW Indiana region has a severe risk of flooding and weather related problems. In 2008, Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties sustained over \$15 million worth of damage to local businesses and homes due to a major flood. The winter of 2013/2014 was the third worst winter in NW Indiana history since 1950's due to the effects from the polar vortex. The polar vortex brought arctic wind chills as low as negative 40 degrees. In February of 2011, NWI received the third largest snow fall in Chicagoland history at 21.2 inches in two days. Also, according to the 2015 edition of the Farmer's Almanac, the coldest winter weather will be found from the Northern Plains to the Great Lakes, with temperatures that could drop to 40 below during the coldest outbreaks: the final weeks of January into beginning of February. (Source LARRI report, WBEZ 91.5 online report, and National Weather Service data)

Our population of residents who are 45 to 64 years of age is 47,261, which is 26.5% of the state total. Residents, ages 65 and older, total 22,167 which is 13.8% of the state total. Currently 12,460 seniors over the age of 65 are considered homebound or disabled. It has been predicted that by 2015 that number will be 13,440 and by 2030 the number of homebound and disabled will be 17,640. By 2030, one in every five residents of Valparaiso, one of Porter County's larger cities, will be over the age of 64. (Source; Personal Assistance Services, 2013 CASOA STATS Indiana, U.S. Census)

Since 2010 in Northwest Indiana the ranking of the services provided to older adults over the age of 60 has dropped 7%. Information about community services provided to this population has dropped from 58% to 47% in the past three years. Indiana ranks as 39th among 50 states for number of healthcare providers per residents at a 1 to 470 ratio. (Source; CASOA and Purdue Center for Regional Development; Healthcare Access in Indiana report PCRD-R-5)

The most common mental health issue for seniors in 2013 was feeling bored, depressed and lonely or isolated, 33% feel this way. There is a definite lack of transportation for seniors in Porter County, which adds to the feeling of isolation, 57% of our senior population grade their ease of travel poor. (Source; CASOA)

Porter County's senior population is growing. Our program plans to recruit 170 volunteers who will share their skills, education and lifetime of experience to help strengthen their community by:

## Narratives

Assisting the homebound, elderly or disabled receive food, transportation, or other services that allow them to live independently

Helping caregivers of homebound, elderly or disabled individuals receive respite services that will increase their social support.

Improving students' (adult and youth) attendance, academic engagement and increasing the number of students, who are acquiring a GED.

Assisting with VITA and increasing the number of economically disadvantaged individuals receiving financial literacy services.

Assisting our veterans and military families through transportation, community-based activities and access to services.

Being trained to assist during a natural or manmade disaster and assemble the tools to help others.

Recruiting volunteers, collecting food and assisting local food pantries with their services in the community.

Mentoring and tutoring youth, grades 1-3, in Reading to increase literacy rates and to increase the number of children reading at grade level by the end of third grade.

All RSVP volunteer activities cover our program's primary focus area of Healthy Futures: Aging in Place and the community needs of: Education, Veterans and Military Families, Economic Opportunity, Disaster Services and Capacity Building. CNCS outcomes for Healthy Futures: Aging in Place, Education: K-12 success, and Capacity Building and Leverage are in place

Our program plans to place 50 unduplicated volunteers to assist with our Primary Focus Area: Aging in Place. These 50 RSVP volunteers will help with transportation, companionship, respite care and food delivery for the elderly, homebound and disabled in NW Indiana. Another 100 unduplicated RSVP volunteers will assist with our community needs of: Education, Veterans and Military Families, Economic Opportunity, and Disaster Services. These 100 RSVP volunteers will help with: the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, early childhood development, assisting young family education, mentoring programs of academic achievement, assisting veterans with transportation, serving our veterans and military families through other community outreach, training in disaster preparedness and first aid, and creation of disaster kits. The rest of our unduplicated volunteers will assist in capacity building and leverage by recruiting new volunteers, garnering donations of food and community need items, and through food pantry support.

Our program has an advisory group that is composed of representative nonprofit organizations and businesses from Porter County. The group will be involved in the planning, implementation, and

## **Narratives**

monitoring of the RSVP program. United Way of Porter County (UWPC) has strong community partnerships that includes nonprofit providers, faith-based groups, healthcare providers, educational institutions, media outlets, business and corporate leaders, governmental entities, and voluntary organizations. UWPC has a history of mobilizing resources to meet critical needs, including volunteers, materials, and financial resources.

UWPC plays a leadership role in many community coalitions, including the Coalition for Affordable Housing, the Veteran Services Coalition, the local COAD, Asset Building Coalition: and in programs such as: United for Children, VITA and AmeriCorps. UWPC partner organizations are selected on the basis of services and programs provided that meet demonstrated community needs, past performance, fiscal responsibility, and capacity to provide meaningful volunteer opportunities with supervisory support in our target areas. Roles and responsibilities are defined in a memorandum of understanding.

United Way of Porter County also acts as a fiscal agent for other grants such as: AmeriCorps, Lilly Foundation grants, CNCS programs, and has the staff experience to fulfill the performance measures and terms of these grants.

We will enhance the capacity of the volunteers we place in community organizations and institutions through various trainings. Training will include Volunteer Management training, consisting of 6 modules: Planning, Recruitment, Retention, Supervision, Integrating Senior Services into Volunteerism, and Orientation. RSVP will grow a closer relationship with AmeriCorps of United Way Porter County through joint services projects such as: Martin Luther King Jr. Day and September 11th Day of Service, Mayor's Day of Recognition, community disaster drills, and other social/educational activities.

### **Recruitment and Development**

The total population of Porter County is 166,557. Approximately 2.5% of Hoosiers live in one of Porter County's 8 towns/cities. Porter County is a racially and culturally diverse region according to the US Census. Porter County has 16% minority populations: 3.4 % African American, 8.9% Hispanic, 1.3 % Asian American, and 5% of other ethnicity. There are 13,828 veterans living in Porter County, which is 2% of all veterans in the state of Indiana. Females make up 50.9% of our residents. Our population of residents who are 45 to 64 years of age is 47,261, which is 26.5% of the state total. The population of residents ages 65 and older is 22,167, which is 13.8% of the state total; (Source; STATS Indiana, U.S. Census.) Pulling from this larger senior population, we plan to recruit 170 volunteers.

The recruitment process will begin with presentations at public meetings, social group affiliations,

## **Narratives**

retired employee group meetings and will include a variety of other means to find the right volunteers to fill our primary and other community needs. All forms of social media, such as website information and multi-media outreach, will also be utilized. Each volunteer receive a volunteer application and be interviewed by the RSVP Director or staff. Past experience, willingness to be trained and proximity to Primary Focus Area or other community need stations will be taken into account before placement. After the volunteer is placed at a station, they will be trained to report back to RSVP on the outcomes of the program, as well as receive any addition training from Station Supervisor. In the case of a volunteer with a disability, alternate stay at home volunteer assignments have been established to allow the volunteer to participate in the program. All stay at home assignments will fit within the CNCS community need or capacity building guidelines.

United Way of Porter County sponsors the Regional Volunteer Center (RVC) of NW Indiana and has access to other non-profits which are outside of our primary focus and community needs. If any volunteer or position no longer fits into our primary focus or a community need, a referral will be made to the RVC.

Each RSVP Volunteer will be subject to review on an as-needed basis. Each volunteer will receive an annual evaluation from their station manager based on specific position characteristics. If there are any problems or concerns voiced by the Station Supervisor or the RSVP volunteer, the RSVP Coordinator will schedule a meeting to resolve any issues as soon as possible. After completion of the application/interview process, all volunteers will receive a welcome packet containing the RSVP guide book, a recent copy of the Newsletter, two reporting sheets, program brochure, and a RSVP membership lapel pin. The volunteer will also receive a RSVP uniform, consisting of a program t-shirt or sweatshirt. In recognition, all RSVP Volunteers and station supervisors will be invited to an annual Volunteer Appreciation Lunch and Awards Ceremony, and quarterly social and education events.

### **Program Management**

All Stations will have a signed MOU, Volunteer Safety Form and Volunteer Assignments with RSVP that will be renewed each grant cycle. Stations will have volunteer assignment descriptions that fit with the Primary Focus Area or other Community needs. Capacity Building volunteer descriptions will be allowed but only on an as-needed basis. Bi-annual visits and volunteer safety check to the RSVP Station will be conducted by the RSVP Director. These checks will ensure that their services are within our primary focus area or community need; station supervisors understand their role and responsibilities regarding volunteers and reporting; and that the volunteers are provided relevant orientation and training on the volunteer assignment to which they are assigned.

## **Narratives**

Each station will be responsible for giving RSVP data needed for their volunteer job assignment, which will fit with either our primary focus area or community need. Resources such as surveys, standardized testing and other reporting tools will be provided by the RSVP Director or staff. Signed time sheets for the volunteer's hours and numbers served will be sent into RSVP on the second Monday of each month.

If a station is found not in compliance with our primary focus area/community need, or is delinquent with reporting sheets, they will receive a written warning from the RSVP Director and instructions how to correct to avoid termination. If the station doesn't become compliant within 30 days of the warning, they will be graduated from the RSVP station roster and current RSVP volunteers will be removed from the station in question. They will receive a letter explaining their removal from RSVP and will be able to reapply after a year probation; with documentation they have corrected outstanding issues.

\*All above statements will be covered in the signed MOU between station supervisor and the RSVP Director.

We have an Advisory group formed that is composed of representatives of nonprofit organizations and businesses for all three counties. They will be involved in the planning and implementation and monitoring of the RSVP program. United Way has strong community partnerships that includes nonprofit providers, faith-based groups, healthcare providers, educational institutions, media outlets, business and corporate leaders, governmental entities, and voluntary organizations. We have a history of mobilizing resources to meet critical needs, including volunteers, materials, and financial resources.

### **Organizational Capability**

Primary Contact:

Sharon A. Kish, President, (sharonk@unitedwaypc.org) with 37 years of non-profit management experience will act as administrator for the grant. Secondary contacts: Michael Glorioso (michael@unitedwaypc.org ) with over 5 years of non-profit management experience will be responsible for the overall operational management of the RSVP grant, and Dawn Thostesen, Finance Manager (dawn@unitedwaypc.org) will coordinate all accounting needs.

Administrator of Federal Funds: United Way of Porter County has been the sponsor of an AmeriCorps program for the past 8 years. We started with 10 members in 2007/08, primarily placed in Porter County. This current program year, we have 53 members who are serving in sites

## **Narratives**

throughout Northwest Indiana. We are also a recipient of a state grant for Hardest Hit Fund for the 7 counties in NW Indiana.

Organizational Background: United Way of Porter County was incorporated in 1957. In our 57 years of operations we have raised and distributed over \$65 million dollars for health and human services. We currently fund 38 health and human service organizations. A 40-member volunteer Board of Directors sets policy and provides oversight. United Way conducts and prioritizes community needs assessments, develops the necessary resources to fund the community safety net, provides fiscal oversight and accountability, and evaluates program results. The work of United Way as a community-building leader has prepared us to manage the RSVP grant. Our Regional United Way Volunteer Center, serves Lake, Porter, LaPorte and Starke Counties. Through this Center there have been over 10,000 volunteer referrals made to the agencies. We host the Day of Caring, the Youth Day of Caring, the Reading Buddies program, the Power of Youth program and the Young Leaders United Affinity Group along with Disaster Response as needed. United Way of Porter County has demonstrated our ability to recruit and support a diverse group of volunteers. The work of United Way as a community-building leader has prepared it to manage the RSVP grant. The administrative, fiscal and programmatic expertise is established and proven.

### **Other**

United Way of Porter County is currently administering an RSVP grant for Lake, LaPorte, and Starke Counties in NW Indiana. We were originally asked to be the interim sponsor of this RSVP grant in 2011 when another organization relinquished the program. We then competed and were awarded a competitive grant in 2013. Currently, we have 200 RSVP volunteers actively serving throughout those counties. In our first year our volunteers served 67,052 men, women and children in those areas and put in 10,597 hours of service at RSVP Stations. RSVP volunteers have helped show an improvement in the clients they served. According to a recent client survey, 75 % of the Meals on Wheels clients served by our RSVP volunteers have reported they now receive regularly scheduled meals and 83% have reported that they feel less lonely and have developed close ties to more people because of the RSVP volunteers' service. Also, our current RSVP Stations have reported a 91% satisfaction rating with their RSVP volunteers.

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

N/A