

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

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The name of the applicant of this grant is New Hanover County Senior Resource Center.

The New Hanover County Senior Resource Center acts as a resource and activity center for senior adults in New Hanover County to provide services which promote wellness, encourage independence and enhance quality of life. These programs include a variety of classes, seminars, and support groups, Senior Service Corps, Independent Life Service and the Home Delivered Meal Program.

An estimated 880 Retired and Senior Volunteer Program volunteers will serve in this project. The volunteer activities will include delivering meals to homebound seniors, providing insurance counseling through the RSVP/SHIIP (Senior Health Insurance Information Program), preparing income tax returns through the RSVP VITA Program (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance), Disaster Assistance and Preparedness, assisting the Department of Veteran Affairs and, School Readiness.

The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures. At the end of the three year grant 880 volunteers will be serving to meet the needs of the clients served in this project.

The Corporation for National and Community Service federal investment of \$111,097 will be supplemented by \$52,618 by the grantee.

## Strengthening Communities

### Strengthening Communities

New Hanover County is a coastal county located in South Eastern North Carolina bordering the Atlantic Ocean. According to the 2013 Census the population of New Hanover County was 213,267. It is estimated that 9.16 of the population are persons 55 years of age or older. New Hanover County has become a popular retirement destination particularly the retirees from the Northeast. Tourism is a major industry in New Hanover County because of the towns of Carolina Beach, Kure Beach and Wrightsville Beach as well as historic downtown Wilmington. Wilmington has become home to the largest film studio outside of Los Angeles. The International Port of Wilmington, Wilmington International Airport, the University of North Carolina Wilmington, and Cape Fear Community College combine to create a pro-active business and educational environment. . The New Hanover County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program have been serving New Hanover County for over 31 years.

There is a constant arrival of retirees to our area. RSVP has benefited from this senior population increase and finds itself in the position of an extremely diverse pool of seniors from which to recruit

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volunteers. The new generations of RSVP volunteers are well educated and are interested in doing volunteer work that will make a difference in the lives of the individuals in their community.

30,000 residents of New Hanover County are over age 60. Approximately 10,000 of this population live alone and are responsible for their own health and safety. Approximately 2,500 are frail and live in unsafe conditions. In order to remain in their homes, a preference of most people and overall cost savings to the health care system, they need assistance. At least 20% of the 2,500 most frail and elderly cannot prepare meals and are at severe risk of malnutrition, etc. In addition, lack of proper nutrition also adds to the risk of terminal illness and acute diseases.

With the New Hanover County RSVP project Primary Focus area being Healthy Futures, RSVP volunteers will provide direct service to frail elderly Home Delivered Meal clients. Services include delivery to homebound individuals through the Home Delivered Meals Weekday and Weekend programs. Assisting at the Food Bank Center at Wilmington, Good Shepard Center, Help Center and Island Cottage sorting and distributing food to those in need.

RSVP Meals on Wheels Drivers will complete a daily report on each of their clients including physical, mental well-being and health changes and general overall attitude. These reports are forwarded to the assigned social worker. These reports are kept on file with each social worker involved and entered in to Servetracker which calculates the number of persons served. The Food Bank Center at Wilmington, Good Shepard Center and the Help Center provide the RSVP Program with the number of clients served on the monthly timesheets which is entered in to the RSVP Access Program. These agencies record the number of clients served for their own funding sources.

According to the 2013 Census of New Hanover County there are 17,403 veterans that live in New Hanover County. Southeastern North Carolina is one of the fastest growing areas to veterans according to the VA Clinic Administrator in Wilmington. To accommodate this large population of veterans the Wilmington Multi-Specialty Outpatient Clinic opened in April 2014. Also known as the "Superclinic", and will offer more services ranging from dental and eye care to prosthetics and diagnostics. The new VA Clinic is known as a one-stop-shop. The clinic expects to see from 15,000 to 18,000 patients a year.

RSVP volunteers will serve at the VA Clinic as greeters, escorts, companionship, assisting veteran's families while at the clinic, activities and visiting with veterans who are in-patients. The number of veterans and veteran's families that are served are recorded by the VA Clinic. The number of persons served by the RSVP volunteer will be recorded on the RSVP volunteer's timesheet that is entered and

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signed by the VA Clinic volunteer support staff.

Many veterans and their families are eligible for benefits and services that they are not aware of.

These veterans need assistance applying for benefits and services.

The County operates the New Hanover County Veteran Services (NHCVS) which assists veterans and eligible family members apply for benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies. Services are also provided on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at the K.B. Hines Senior Center located on Carolina Beach. RSVP volunteers will assist veterans and family members apply for benefits and other services available to them. New Hanover County Veteran Services maintains records of the number of veterans and veteran families that apply for services. The number of persons served will be recorded on the volunteer's timesheet as well as records maintained by the County.

### **Recruitment and Development**

Recruitment and Development

The RSVP volunteers in New Hanover County represent a broad variety of members of our community including persons with physical disabilities, minorities, men, women, persons from different religious backgrounds, veterans and different socio- economic backgrounds. Persons with disabilities are encouraged to become RSVP volunteers and reasonable accommodations are made for them. We encourage the volunteers to use their skills, experiences and abilities to improve the community and themselves through volunteerism. Having such a diverse group of volunteer helps us to meet the needs in our community.

Once a RSVP volunteer is enrolled in the program staff meets with the volunteer to determine what their skills and interests are and how they best fit the program. An orientation is done at the New Hanover County Senior Resource Center with RSVP staff. Each volunteer is given a volunteer handbook that covers the history and mission of RSVP, eligibility requirements, benefits, volunteer insurance, timesheets. The handbook also covers activities that are prohibited while serving as a RSVP volunteer that includes electoral activities, voter registration, efforts to influence legislation and religious instruction. The policy on termination of volunteers is also included. Once the RSVP volunteer is assigned to a station they receive training that is relevant to that particular volunteer station. Volunteers receive job descriptions to assist in the training process.

A large part of the training focuses on the importance of confidentiality. A majority of our volunteer stations work with individuals whose identity must be kept confidential. Each new RSVP volunteer signs Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement which is placed in their file. If the volunteer will be serving

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at a station that requires a FBI background check New Hanover County performs the check at no cost to the volunteer.

The RSVP program uses the following outlets for recruitment in the community:

- \*The New Hanover County Newspapers in Carolina Beach, Wilmington and Wrightsville Beach.
  - \* Radio and TV both local radio and TV stations promote the RSVP program.
  - \* New Hanover County Government Public Television Station which runs a continual ad for RSVP.
  - \* Health Fairs and Senior Fairs, RSVP sets up a display board and RSVP brochures and has volunteers and staff man the booth.
  - \* Word-of-mouth is one of our best recruiting methods. Volunteers' sharing good volunteer experiences with others is a great recruitment tool.
  - \* The NHC Senior Resource Center website posts all RSVP volunteer opportunities available.
  - \* The "Tides and Times" bi-monthly newsletter lists volunteer opportunities and spotlights RSVP volunteers.
  - \*Email -- with an estimated 80% of our RSVP volunteers having email addresses we can communicate volunteer opportunities faster and at no cost.
  - \* New Hanover County Intranet Page -- RSVP announcements are posted on the NHC Intranet page.
- The New Hanover County RSVP program volunteers do an outstanding job serving in the community and to show our appreciation to them we host quarterly recognition events per year for all the RSVP volunteers. The volunteers enjoy networking with volunteers from other volunteer stations and sharing their experiences. This past year we held an Ice Cream social in August 2013, a Thanksgiving Brunch in November 2013 and a Spring Tea in March 2014. Currently an event is being planned for September 2014.

In addition to the recognition events all RSVP volunteers receive a birthday card in the mail, personal thank you notes and free theater tickets from Thalian Hall.

### Program Management

Program Management

The New Hanover County RSVP programs works to develop and manage volunteer stations and opportunities that will address a significant number of needs in our community and provide meaningful experiences for the RSVP volunteers. All volunteer stations receive and sign a Memorandum of Understanding that includes the prohibited activities of a volunteer station, a Safety Checklist for the volunteer station and a Handicapped Accessibility Checklist. The Memorandum of Understanding also includes a self-declaration that the volunteer station is a public or non-profit

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organization, or a proprietary health care agency. Once a year the volunteer stations are contact to insure they are maintaining a safe environment for their volunteers. This is usually done by e-mail or mail. All volunteer stations are required to provide volunteer training in the area they will be serving and a job description that lists the duties the volunteer is to perform.

Currently we are accepting new volunteer stations that will fit into our new primary focus area, community priority or other focus areas. Our plan for the program to continue meeting the changing community needs with minimal disruption to the volunteers. The program will not have to make many changes although we will have to graduate some of the volunteer stations. We will give the volunteer the opportunity to remain with that station or be reassigned. Volunteer Stations are visited and updated yearly. Monthly timesheets allow for the RSVP Coordinator to monitor the volunteers hours.

The primary focus area is Healthy Futures. Currently at the New Hanover County Senior Resource Center we have a very strong Home Delivered Meal program. The RSVP Home Delivered Meals drivers deliver over 300 meals daily to homebound seniors. There is currently a waiting list for the Home Delivered Meal Program. The numbers of clients served daily are entered into the SERVtracker Program.

Our SHIIP Program (Senior Health Insurance Information Program) - RSVP/SHIIP volunteers provide a counseling and assistance walk-in-Clinic every Tuesday and Thursday from 11-1 for persons with Medicare insurance questions and problems. For certain circumstances the RSVP/SHIIP volunteers will make appointments to meet with people on Mondays. RSVP/SHIIP has been a successful program at the New Hanover County Senior Resource Center for over 12 years. For each person counseled the SHIIP volunteer completes a Client Counseling Contact Form which is reported to the state monthly.

The RSVP/ VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) volunteers prepare federal and state tax returns at no cost. The program is aimed at serving low to moderate income, seniors, homebound persons and persons with disabilities. During tax season February 1 -- April 15th the NHC Senior Resource Center is available to prepare taxes Monday thru Friday. The RSVP/VITA Program has been at the New Hanover County Senior Resource Center for over 11 years. This past tax year 2013 the RSVP/VITA program filed 3780 federal returns and 2853 state returns. The median income of the clients being served was \$20,607.

RSVP currently has an Advisory Council in place and they meet quarterly. All active stations have a signed Memorandum of Understanding and all volunteers are 55 years of age and older.

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## Organizational Capability

### Organizational Capacity

The RSVP Program has been successfully operating in New Hanover County since it started in 1973. The Senior Service Manager manages both the RSVP and Foster Grandparent Programs. The RSVP project has a detailed process in place for volunteer recruitment, recognition, and volunteer training. Performance and program quality is assured through project progress reports, federal reports and annual evaluations. Senior Service Corps has a strong relationship with its sponsor New Hanover County, New Hanover County Government, and community organizations.

Tracy Ash, Senior Service Corps Program Manager is responsible for the RSVP and FGP Programs. Tracy's responsibilities include writing the grants for RSVP and FGP, the budget, completing progress reports and any other reports required by the Corporation as well as day-to-day operation of the program. Tracy supervises the RSVP Program Coordinator and the FGP Program Coordinator and a part-time RSVP Coordinator. Tracy has been the Senior Service Corps Director since October 2012. Before accepting the RSVP position, Tracy had over 12 years of experience as the Senior Companion Program Coordinator at Land-of-Sky Regional Council in Asheville, NC, and 7 years working at a community mental health center in Daytona Beach, FL.

The New Hanover County RSVP program currently employs one full-time RSVP Coordinator. RSVP Program Coordinator Valerie Smith has been a member of the RSVP staff since March 2010. Prior to becoming the RSVP Program Coordinator she worked as the Transportation Program Coordinator. Valerie oversees the Volunteer Incomer Assistance Program (VITA) and the Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP). She holds a Master's Degree in Human Resource Development. Valerie is also responsible for recruiting volunteers, timesheets

The part-time RSVP Program Coordinator Jeanette Bell works 12 hours per week. Jeanette's primary responsibilities include administrative duties including updating the database, coordinating the Coops for Troops volunteers. Jeanette is responsible for keeping the Memorandum of Understanding up to date.

The financial management system MUNIS used in the RSVP project follows the same policies and procedures of New Hanover County Government for finance, human resources, and budget. The financial and administrative staff of the Senior Resource Center along with the Grants Management and Finance Department staff of New Hanover County Government provides administrative/financial support. The Senior Service Corps Manager has the authority to purchase items and services as allocated in the RSVP grant. Receipts for purchased items and services are given

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to the Finance Specialist housed at the NHC Senior Resource Center. The Finance Specialist in turn enters all expense information into the New Hanover County MUNIS database and maintains hard copy records at the Senior Resource Center. Timesheets for the Senior Corps Project Manager and RSVP Coordinators are done bi-weekly using MUNIS employee self-service. Payroll is handled through the Finance Department of New Hanover County Government.

Tracy Ash has access to the MUNIS system in order to view all transactions on a daily basis. This enables the Senior Service Corps Project Manager to better manage the RSVP budget. All invoices for staff and volunteer reimbursements are handled through the Finance Department of New Hanover County Government.

New Hanover County Grants Officer Teresa Hewett oversees the RSVP grant. The Grants Officer prepares the 6 month and end of year Federal Financial Report for the RSVP grant. The Grants Officer also requests the quarterly funds from the Corporation. The Grants Officer is housed in the Finance Department at the New Hanover County Government Center

Performance measurements and impact programming are in place for stations and reporting from those stations is utilized to determine the effectiveness of the program areas. Stations provide mission statements during the initial orientation when a Memorandum of Understanding is negotiated and then provide client statistics during the year as requested. These statistics help assess the needs and effectiveness of RSVP programs and volunteer stations.

The Senior Service Corps Manager and Coordinators continually evaluate the program in order to make necessary adjustments and improvements. The RSVP volunteers and station coordinators are encouraged to contribute their evaluations and suggestions at any time.

### **Other**

N/A

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

N/A