

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

RSVP of the Capital Region, Inc., is a self-incorporated, free standing agency. Capital Region is a 42 year CNCS grantee, which covered five counties, Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, and Perry, in southcentral PA, until October 2012, when Capital Region added an East Division, which serves the relinquished counties of Lancaster and Lebanon and the adjoining, then unserved York County, which was encircled by the existing and relinquished counties.

Mission: RSVP of the Capital Region provides meaningful volunteer opportunities for persons 55 years of age and older and provides measurable value to the community.

An estimated 681 RSVP volunteers will serve in the RSVP of the Capital Region-East. All activities will be included within Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures, and Veterans and Military Families. The Primary Focus Area of this project is Healthy Futures.

At the end of the three-year grant, 1,688 individuals will report increased food security; 360 individuals with disabilities will have increased social supports through food delivery, transportation, and companionship services; 1,200 seniors will receive Medicare information through APPRISE; 900 individuals will be assisted in preparation for disasters; while 480 will be directly assisted in responding to disasters; 360 people will donate blood; 72 children will demonstrate gains in social/emotional development; 119 students will improve academic performance in literacy/math; 40 students will improve their academic engagement through mentoring/ tutoring programs; 2,400 seniors and low income individuals will have their taxes/rent rebates completed; eight economically disadvantaged individuals will be placed in jobs; volunteers will work on improving 100 miles of waterways in public park areas; 325 Veterans will be assisted with transportation; 4,500 Veterans will be served through various types of community services; 50 Veterans will receive support through the Veterans Court; and 3,000 disabled/senior Veterans will have companionship services; 50 economically disadvantaged individuals will be transitioned into housing.

The CNCS federal investment of \$xxxxx will be supplemented by \$xxxxx in non-federal resources in local match through United Way, community and corporate foundations, and in-kind donations. This does not include \$xxxx in excess covering all fundraising activities.

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## Strengthening Communities

RSVP of the Capital Region, Inc., added the relinquished Lancaster and Lebanon Counties and new adjoining York County, a 2,257 total square mile area, to its existing area covering Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin and Perry Co., in October 2012. Approximately 296,699 seniors, 55 and over (27% of total population of 1,087,985), reside in this new East region. Highlights to the area include: York Co., a mix of rural and urban neighborhoods, is a manufacturing hub, from Harley Davidson to Utz snack foods. It is a low cost alternative for Maryland retirees. Lebanon Co. has moved from mid-80's closed steel plants to the 6th best performing small metro area in the nation and first in PA. Lebanon is also first in gross domestic product growth in PA, outperforming state and national economies. Like senior Volunteers, Lebanon has reinvented itself. Lancaster Co., known to most of the US for Amish/ Mennonite populations, maintains 63% of all land in agriculture despite a population of over 500,000.

RSVP of the Capital Region-East's primary Focus Area is Healthy Futures, centering on Food Security and Aging in Place. In June, 2013, Central Pennsylvania Food Bank and Feeding America (FA) released a new study which revealed that approximately 18% of children under the age of 18, more than 121,000 children, are struggling with hunger in the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank's 27-County service area. Throughout the commonwealth, more than 663,000 children are food insecure. According to FeedingAmerica's 2012 report on Food Insecurity & Food Cost in the US, 11.4% or 59,440 are food insecure in Lancaster County, 10.8% or 14,470 in Lebanon County, and 11.7% or 50,650 in York County.

In 2009, the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, in conjunction with Feeding America, also participated in a national project that focused on surveying those who are hungry in America. The national study is based on completed in-person interviews with more than 61,000 clients served by the FA national network, as well as on completed questionnaires from more than 37,000 FA agencies. These results provide a snapshot about the people who struggle to find food in our local communities: 34% of those served by the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank are children under the age of 18. 8% of those served are under the age of 5. 63% of those served are under the federal poverty level. 44% of those served said they had to choose between buying food and paying for utilities or heat. For these reasons, RSVP of the Capital Region-East supports work in food banks, congregate meal sites, produce co-ops, any program that puts food into the hands of those most in need in Lancaster, Lebanon, and York

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Counties. RSVP will provide 150 volunteers to help organize donated food, pack bags, distribute groceries, and provide free meals at 11 stations to serve food to 2,250 clients. The 11 stations cross communities in all three Counties.

Because of advancements in medical diagnoses and proactive treatment, more people are adopting healthy lifestyles and nutrition and, consequently, are living longer. Coupled with the large Baby Boomer cohort advancing in age, there is an ever larger population of elderly individuals living on their own, either in the family home or in an apartment. The health and well-being of older adults is important to society because the longer they can live independently, the lower the cost will be to society as a whole. According to the Pennsylvania Health Care Association, nursing home care can cost more than \$5,000 per month.

According to the 2012 National Survey of Older Americans Act Program Participants conducted for the U.S. Administration on Aging, 92% of clients say Meals on Wheels (MOW) means they can continue to live in their own home. By using volunteers engaged in providing services through Meals on Wheels (MOW) programs, RSVP helps to keep seniors living independently. County Area Agencies on Aging assess applicants' eligibility as being frail and/or homebound because of physical, mental, or emotional disability and without a caregiver who is able to provide meals on a regular basis. Meals are delivered five days per week, 52 weeks per year by volunteers who observe, in the brief contact, the well-being of the homebound individuals receiving the meals. Twenty RSVP Volunteers will deliver meals to 200 recipients through six stations across the three Counties.

RSVP Development Coordinators have met with representatives of Area Agencies on Aging who have recommended the establishment of a Telephone Assurance Program (TAP) to provide support and companionship to homebound. TAP is a program through which RSVP Volunteers make regular telephone calls to homebound elderly and disabled persons to check on their well-being and give people an opportunity to socialize. TAP's main purpose is to alleviate some of the concerns facing those who live alone, and to help them to remain independent in their homes. Forty RSVP Volunteers based from six stations will call or visit homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities to provide companionship and support to 160 individuals, helping them to remain independent in their residences.

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According to the American Foundation for the Blind, there are 249,881 Pennsylvanians with visual loss in 2012. One specific need which exists in the community is transportation services for the sight impaired. RSVP Development Coordinators have been asked to support the provision of transportation services for the sight impaired in Lancaster and Lebanon Counties. Ten RSVP volunteers will provide sight impaired individuals with transportation services in Lancaster and Lebanon Counties through one station, VisionCorps.

There is certainly much overlap in the types of services needed by the general senior and challenged population as that seen in Veterans' services. Service on a large scale to Veterans was unknown to RSVP of the Capital Region prior to the addition of the East in 2012. The East serves the Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center in Lebanon. Through PA CARES, a regional networking group for all agencies serving Veterans, and the VA Voluntary Services at the VA Medical Center, on which the Program Director and Lebanon Development Coordinator serve, staff broadened the ways RSVP Volunteers serve Veterans and better utilize Veterans as RSVP Volunteers. In addition to the VA Medical Center at Lebanon, RSVP added positions as Disabled American Veterans van drivers, recruited Veteran RSVP Volunteers to mentor Veterans in support of York County Veterans Court and brought Troopons and toiletries collection projects to assist Veterans and active military to senior centers across the tri-county area. The major thrusts of Volunteer opportunities working with Veterans are reflected in the workplans. It is very exciting to have an entirely new area of community need opening up to not only these three Counties, but the other five in RSVP of the Capital Region's eight county agency.

RSVP utilizes Volunteer Reporter for the volunteer and station data collection. Data for outcomes is collected by each Coordinator from stations in their County. All Coordinators are assigned specific workplans/outcomes. Coordinators share data collected with the appropriate person handling that workplan and set of outcomes. The Program Director oversees all project performance and evaluation at multiple times during the year as various funding sources' reports are due, in addition to CNCS. There are additional outcomes and models for various funding streams. All outcomes and workplans are reviewed annually by the Board's Evaluation Committee. There are also tie-ins between the community impact programming and the agency's Strategic Plan as far as maintaining or expanding specific impact programs. The achievement of those levels is annually reviewed by the Board.

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The strength and abilities in tracking raw data, merging it together with other counties served, and analyzing has been done since the late 90s, when outcomes of this variety clicked in place in the not for profit world. As you can see by the diversity of funding streams that Capital Region maintains and East is rapidly developing, that also equates to a diversity of the way data is reported for each funder. But key to it all is the need to gather the data, record it, and be able to retrieve it efficiently. Forty-nine per cent of RSVP Volunteers serve in outcome workplans under CNCS system.

### Recruitment and Development

RSVP offers diverse experiences to accommodate Senior Volunteers of all abilities/generations/skills/desires. Operating programs or being equal partners with stations facilitates East's ability to provide quality volunteer experiences. Quality, "pulse of the community" opportunities are offered to new and existing Volunteers providing fresh experiences. Possible opportunities that would fit specific Volunteers' needs who have challenges are worked on continuously through Coordinators' collection of the Accessibility and Safety Checklist every year at every station, which helps develop an inventory of appropriate Volunteer jobs.

Volunteer tutoring leaders help with recruitment, training and gathering data. RSVP volunteers are RSVP Board members, facilitate Explore Your Future sessions, tutor, and manage not for profits without staff assistance, sometimes creating a not for profit as a social entrepreneur. Volunteers are featured as leaders in media opportunities and presentations to funders/organizations. RSVP feeds the need that many boomers have for highly skilled positions with leadership opportunities.

As an example of training for Healthy Futures Volunteers, food bank and congregate meal Volunteers must participate in safe food handlers' trainings and may go beyond that to attend trainings with the Central PA Food Bank on ordering food. An example of this would be the JOY Food Pantry, which is entirely operated by RSVP Volunteers in Jonestown (Lebanon Co.) Potential tutors participate in RSVP's two hour, group, in-house training on expectations and boundary setting with the elementary school providing a second two hour training to provide comfort with security and "how things work." Volunteers who serve at the Lebanon VA go through orientation, as did RSVP staff. The Coming of Age, Explore Your Future Program has an exceptional opportunity at the close of September 2014, for new RSVP Volunteers to participate in a two day facilitators' training on the Explore Your Future curriculum by staff from Coming of Age, Philadelphia. Explore Your Future leads predominantly boomers, but also some older and younger retirees, through creating a plan for the second half of their

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lives to fulfill dreams and promises, make change, and from the RSVP standpoint, hopefully choose a path of volunteerism. Facilitators then present four, two hour professional sessions to participants that include evaluations, which then go on to the Coming of Age Program in Philadelphia. Many volunteer positions offer trainings, participation in in-services or a "buddy" approach to teach the skills needed for the volunteer roles.

The results of the most recent volunteer survey showed that 99% of the respondents felt that volunteering made a positive difference in their lives and 84% were satisfied with their volunteer placement.

The populations of Lancaster, Lebanon, and York Counties are predominantly white with significant Hispanic populations, 8.6% in Lancaster, 9.3% in Lebanon, and 5.6% in York. With the exception of York County with a 5.6% African American population, the remaining minority populations in the three Counties are all below 4%. Within East's current Volunteer pool for Lancaster, Lebanon, and York, the Coordinators have recruited the following sampling of self-identified populations: 8 (3.4%) Hispanic, 3 (1.3%) African American, 1 (.4%) Asian, 34 (18.4%) Veterans, 10 (4.3%) Disabled, 78 (33.3%) Male, 35 (15%) 55-60 years of age, 47 (20.1%) 61-65 years of age, 5 (2.1%) who speak English less fluently. These levels will continue to improve in minority communities as RSVP becomes more known and accepted.

RSVP receives excellent press, but the greatest recruiting tool remains word of mouth.

VolunteerMatch is quite effective in "bringing people to the door." A blog and better calendar have been added to the RSVP website, [rsvpcapreg.org](http://rsvpcapreg.org). The website allows us to drive the public to the website for comprehensive information and direct listings from VolunteerMatch. Through RSVP's Ad Hoc Marketing Committee, Wendy Shumaker of O Advertising, Newport, provided the work on the website and now works as a Board member to further define and brand RSVP through print.

RSVP of the Capital Region-East already obtained a grant through United Way of Lebanon County to start a Volunteer Administrators' Network for Lebanon County, which will include free lunchtime training opportunities, bringing new stations, more diverse stations, to the table at East's invitation.

RSVP staff and Volunteer leaders display at senior expos and fairs, community and health fairs, and

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UW events, and present to senior/church/civic/corporate groups. The senior expos in Lancaster and York Counties are one aspect of a multi-faceted marketing campaign being led by the Lancaster County Coordinator with Online Publishers bringing together a package of paid and in-kind advertising in Senior News and County Resource Directories with on-site recruitment at the expos.

One day event Volunteers help recruit not only boomers but Volunteers wanting to try out the role, entering the world of volunteering more as a social activity as opposed to an ongoing commitment. York County's Coordinator lead a late spring campaign to fill Volunteer roles for a weeklong capacity building/fundraising event for Make A Wish Foundation at the CanAm Olympic style games in York, for first responders from the East Coast.

Volunteer retention has not been an issue. Volunteers link up and stay, some 25 to 30 years. Volunteers join us able to drive, totally ambulatory. As they age, RSVP adapts-new roles, new stations, even some home based. Adapting to change is what RSVP is about.

### Program Management

RSVP of the Capital Region leaves itself open to new opportunities, new stations, adaptable responses to community needs, and new programming within the framework of the six CNCS focus areas. Thirty-five per cent of East's outcome workplans are within Healthy Futures. Without moving a new area down an old direction, Capital Region chose through its Strategic Planning process to seek opportunities and partners within the new structure, eliminating hospitals, nursing homes, senior centers, museums, and libraries, traditional bastions of large numbers of stations and volunteers, from program development, unless those facilities served Veterans or had unique programs within their service activities that were modern, more boomer oriented, and met new CNCS outcomes. This eliminates the issue down the road of having to graduate a station. RSVP always seeks stations which can partner to meet unmet community needs that have been identified by local United Ways' focus care councils, Agencies on Aging's long term plans, or other stations.

Coordinators meet with new stations, explain RSVP and its policies and station responsibilities, share volunteer hour and mileage forms, gather job descriptions, and discuss needs for data in the case of outcomes based activities, prior to all stations' representatives signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MU). At the same time, an Accessibility and Safety Checklist is completed in conjunction with station staff to ascertain appropriate placements for volunteers with special needs or

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talents. This assessment is completed annually, MU every three years, unless staff or programs undergo major change. Stations supply a range of position descriptions. A wide range of placements are needed to meet the range of abilities among the volunteers; therefore, "meaningful" to one may not be even possible for another. Prohibited activities are discussed, detailed on the MU, discussed with new volunteers, and detailed on a statement the new volunteers sign as part of enrolling as an RSVP volunteer, which also includes confirming their birth date for eligibility purposes. RSVP has been part of the push for stations to design volunteer positions for those who want to think, lead, manage, and plan, in order to satisfy many of the younger seniors' needs for engagement. Stations are contacted at least twice a year with reference to outcomes data collection.

Service on a large scale to Veterans was unknown to RSVP of the Capital Region prior to the addition of the East in 2012, when there was now a Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VA) in a County being served, Lebanon. Through PA CARES, a regional networking group for all agencies serving Veterans, and the VA Voluntary Services, on which the Program Director and Lebanon Development Coordinator serve, staff broadened the ways RSVP Volunteers serve Veterans and better utilize Veterans as RSVP Volunteers. In addition to the VA Medical Center at Lebanon, RSVP added positions as Disabled American Veterans(DAV) van drivers, recruited Veteran RSVP Volunteers to mentor Veterans in support of York County Veterans Court and brought Troopons and toiletries collection projects to assist Veterans and active military to senior centers across the tri-county area.

Healthy Futures is the Primary Focus Area for the East at 35%; however, as a frame of reference, it is also the Primary Focus Area for the other five counties served by RSVP of the Capital Region. Those areas covered by Healthy Futures in which RSVP is most active have been the backbone of a 42 year development. Keeping seniors independent in their own homes has been a centerpiece of social entrepreneurship for this RSVP since day one, as groups of RSVP Volunteers came forward and formed not for profit agencies, which they have operated through Boards and management voted on/selected every few years to serve entirely as Volunteers without paid staffing to provide senior centers, transportation, Meals on Wheels, even bringing food banks to rural areas, for 25 and more years as RSVP stations. Therefore, RSVP of the Capital Region already has an extended history of collecting data and measuring performance in this primary Focus Area, although there have been some difficulties in gaining access to recipients of services due to privacy laws and their interpretations with regard to some of the new options for surveying, for instance. Aging offices have not been

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cooperative about permitting contact of this nature with the seniors receiving services. However, equally, there has been some ability to incorporate RSVP's data collection needs into those done by the Aging offices with say, Meals on Wheels recipients. In the East, since staff came on board in January 2013, 21 of the 24 stations included in the workplans are already in place to provide for food security and delivery, transportation, and companionship through the services of 239 RSVP Volunteers across the three County area. All staff were involved in the heavily outcomes focused Virtual Conference in 2013 and all attended the CNCS Regional Conference in New Brunswick, NJ, in the fall of 2013, to receive the latest performance measurements training. Outcomes have been collected under the old workplan system just not with the new tools.

RSVP utilizes Volunteer Reporter for the volunteer and station data collection. Data for outcomes is collected by each Coordinator from stations in their County. All Coordinators are assigned specific workplans/outcomes. Coordinators share data collected with the appropriate person handling that workplan and set of outcomes. The Program Director oversees all project performance and evaluation at multiple times during the year as various funding sources' reports are due, in addition to CNCS. There are additional outcomes and models for various funding streams. All outcomes and workplans are reviewed annually by the Board's Evaluation Committee. There are also tie-ins between the community impact programming and the agency's Strategic Plan as far as maintaining or expanding specific impact programs. The achievement of those levels is annually reviewed by the Board.

RSVP of the Capital Region is incorporated independent of any sponsor and has been for 22 years. Therefore, this RSVP has a full Board of Directors, as was explained in the attachments. As part of the Strategic Plan completed in 2012, a recruiting push was put in place to add additional Board members from the new counties. There are currently five Board members from the East, Lancaster, Lebanon, and York area. There is a revitalized campaign to add still more Board members that was generated from an August 2014 joint retreat with Board and staff.

### Organizational Capability

Created in 1972, incorporated in 1991, RSVP of the Capital Region has served Cumberland, Dauphin, and Perry Co. for 40 years, added Franklin Co. in 2003, and Adams Co. in 2008. The agency is oriented to geographic expansion and began service to the relinquished Lebanon/Lancaster area with previous staff and York with the assistance of existing CNCS programs and the cooperation of the Area Agency on Aging and United Way.

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The two key staff positions are the Executive (ED) and Program (PD) Directors. The ED, Carol Oman, has been at RSVP for 15 years and has 35 years of not for profit administration experience, receiving a Non Profit Executive Leadership Institute certification from Bryn Mawr College in 2011. The former Lebanon County Coordinator, Cathy Gable, with seven years' experience then, returned as Program Director with Capital Region-East. The PD is responsible for supervising 3 full-time County Development Coordinators, who were hired have been in their positions since January 2013.

RSVP contracts bookkeeping services through Wilson Bookkeeping Services. The ED is responsible for financial management. QuickBooks Pro is utilized for accounting. RSVP has administered a CNCS grant since 1972. The agency has multiple federal pass through grants since 2003 from the PA Dept of Ed and USDA. RSVP is audited annually by SFandCo, of Harrisburg.

Capital Region has therefore been monitored numerous times by CNCS and PA Dept. of Education and has been compliant with required policies and procedures. An A-133 audit is just being completed for 2013, and the agency was not found wanting in any compliance areas. All policies requested for submission are in place with regards to accounting, personnel management, and bidding. A new fixed assets policy was enacted in August 2014.

As the reviewer will note, RSVP of the Capital Region maintains a highly diverse funding base of all levels of matching funds from foundations to additional federal grants through pass throughs to United Ways. The agency follows a three year Strategic Plan which guides the Board and staff through agreed upon growth areas.

### **Other**

N/A

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

N/A