

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

The Nevada Rural Counties RSVP Program, Inc. (NV Rural RSVP) is a self-sponsored 501 (c)(3) organization with a volunteer Board of Directors that has been serving the 15 rural counties of Nevada for over 41 years. NV Rural RSVP's mission is to help frail, homebound, and low-income seniors remain independent by providing high quality programs which allow them to stay in their own homes with dignity. Additionally, RSVP coordinates a volunteer network of seniors who use their skills and talents to provide support to community agencies and address community needs through service.

NV Rural RSVP "Independent Living" and "In-Home Care" services are implemented through the escorted Transportation, Home Companion, Respite Care, Legal Aid, and Senior Nutrition Programs. The most serious community need that must be addressed is that increasing numbers of low-income seniors are unable to remain independent and in their own homes without assistance. This is a result of not being able to access basic needs services, and so are at risk for costly institutionalization, creating a heavy burden on already stretched local and state government resources for Medicare, Medicaid and even nursing home capacity.

940 NV Rural RSVP program volunteers will help frail, homebound seniors remain independent and in their own homes and will address community needs through service. Some of their activities will include providing senior citizens with escorted round-trip transportation, companionship, Respite care services, pro bono legal services, as well as food distribution and delivery. The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures. At the end of the three-year grant, 4,040 seniors living in rural Nevada will have been served and of the 1,220 who will be surveyed, 723 (65%) will report having increased social ties/perceived social support. The CNCS federal investment of \$147,683 will be supplemented by \$ 947,817.

## Strengthening Communities

NV Rural RSVP serves senior citizens in 15 of the 17 Counties in Nevada. The population of the 15 rural Nevada counties served is 327,830 of which 75,400 are seniors 60 years of age and older, 19,604 of whom are living in poverty and 18,078 live with a disability, according to the American Community Survey.

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A critical challenge in keeping seniors independent is that in rural Nevada, they are spread out over an area of over 100,000 square miles of mainly deserts, mountains and very rural communities. Seniors are isolated and social services are limited or not available at all. In many cases, NV Rural RSVP is the only source of transportation, companionship, Respite care, legal assistance, access to food, or other needed assistance. These volunteer activities provided by NV Rural RSVP align with our Primary Focus Area: Healthy Futures.

The University of Nevada Reno's Sanford Center for Aging, "Elders Count Nevada, 2013" reports that between 2000 and 2010, when Nevada's population grew faster than any other state, on a percentage basis, the state's senior population grew by 48.2%, more than any state except Alaska. As of 2011, Nevada had 340,000 people 65 or older in the total population of 2.72 million. Proportion of elders is growing: Nationally and in Nevada, as the baby boom generation ages, the proportion of the population that is 65 and older is growing. Currently about 11.5% in Nevada, the elder segment is projected to grow to about 16% by 2030.

The National Council on Aging and Administration on Aging reports that the elderly population is living longer, but not necessarily healthier lives and that by 2015 the number of seniors needing assistance will increase at a rate higher than the number of people able to provide care, creating a crisis in long-term care, independent living support, and respite care.

"Caregiving as a Risk Factor for Mortality: The Caregiver Health Effects Study", by Schulz, R. and Beach, S. R. tells us that elderly spousal caregivers with a history of chronic illness themselves who are experiencing caregiving related stress have a 63% higher mortality rate than their non-caregiving peers.

"Aging in Place in America" commissioned by Clarity and the Ear Foundation found that seniors fear going into a nursing home more than death. Almost half of the seniors living in long-term care facilities reported serious depression. The Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Suicide Prevention, tells us that Nevada seniors over 60 have the highest suicide rate in the nation, over double the national average for the same age group. Researchers pinpoint that isolation, bereavement, reduced ability, illness, and pain lead to depression.

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Seniors prefer to remain living independently in their own homes; however, without supportive services, they are often forced to relocate, move to an assisted living facility and ultimately to move to a nursing home.

Volunteer service activities in the primary focus area, Healthy Futures, will assist older adults and 24/7 caregivers and their loved-ones to live independently and at home with dignity where they are happiest and healthiest. Six hundred fifty-eight senior volunteers will provide the following independent living services:

- 500 seniors will receive round-trip escorted transportation to medical appointments, to pick up prescriptions and groceries, and to socialization events;
- 420 seniors will receive home companionship and essential home services;
- 300 caregivers who provide 24/7 care, will receive Respite Care (regular breaks) and the loved-ones at home will be provided with companionship and safety;
- 1,900 seniors will be provided with pro bono legal services to prevent them from becoming victims of elder abuse, and to protect assets to provide for their care and support; and
- 920 low-income seniors will receive food delivery services.

To support data collection and ensure that performance measure outcomes and outputs are measured, collected, and managed, NV Rural RSVP will utilize monthly time and activity reports received from the volunteers and Volunteer Field Representatives documenting the name of the clients, hours served, and the service activities performed. For each new client an initial intake will be conducted and a service plan will be developed. Service plans will be updated during an annual re-assessment of all clients using NV Rural RSVP Client Satisfaction Survey. Survey results will identify the level of satisfaction with services received. Survey results will also show that NV Rural RSVP services allow them to live independently, have increased social ties/perceived social support, and a higher quality of life. Monthly time and activity reports, assessment details, and survey results will be stored in our in-house database and data will be used for project reporting and future project enhancement.

### **Recruitment and Development**

Over the past two decades we have seen a growing body of research that indicates volunteering provides individual health benefits in addition to social benefits. This research, which is presented by Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS) in a report titled "The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research" has established a strong relationship between

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volunteering and health: those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer. Because volunteering provides physical and social activity and a sense of purpose at a time when their social roles are changing, NV Rural RSVP not only benefits the elderly and communities served, but also benefits the dedicated seniors who volunteer in their communities.

NV Rural RSVP's mission is to help frail, homebound, and low-income seniors remain independent by providing high quality programs which allow them to stay in their own homes with dignity. Additionally, NV Rural RSVP coordinates a volunteer network of seniors who use their skills and talents to provide support to community agencies and address community needs through service.

The Independent Living Programs provide high impact direct services to seniors which helps them to remain independent and in their own homes and vital members of their community. These services include 1) escorted transportation, 2) home companion, 3) Respite Care, 4) pro bono legal assistance, 5) food delivery and Senior Farmer's Market Free Produce Coupon Distribution, 6) Lifeline emergency response telephone services, and 7) Resistance Exercise Training Program. Services increase senior citizens' ability to live independently in their own homes with dignity. NV Rural RSVP volunteer stations activities include crime prevention, adult and children literacy tutoring, Medicare and Medicaid counseling, hospital volunteer services, public museum docent services, library services for the community and homebound, computer assistance for the elderly and needy, veterans memorial services, feeding children in need through Backpack Buddies and Food for Thought, animal shelter dog and cat socialization, community theater ushers, office assistance, and more.

NV Rural RSVP's recruitment and development strategy is to focus on healthy futures for seniors and to ensure a high quality experience for volunteers by providing them with meaningful opportunities to share talents and to improve their communities through service.

Volunteers are recruited through all media opportunities including Public Service Announcements, word of mouth, community partner referrals, volunteer fairs, printed materials newspaper articles, and social media. Community outreach efforts include feature stories and weekly listings in the local newspapers and newsletters. One of the most successful recruitment tools we use is the "Volunteer Connection." This is a weekly newspaper article listing all available NV Rural RSVP volunteer

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opportunities. NV Rural RSVP participates in a wide variety of volunteer fairs and senior citizen events as volunteer mobilization tools.

Ongoing training of the Volunteer Field Representatives serving in the 15 counties is a priority and includes site visits by the Executive Director and Program Coordinator. An annual training seminar for these volunteer leaders provides them with information on successful volunteer management, compassionate communication, and leadership. Quarterly training sessions have been highly successful in recruitment, development and retention as they are teleconferenced to Volunteer Field Representatives and volunteers statewide with the assistance of the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension. Many other community partners actively participate in the training to broaden the reach of our message, including University of Nevada's Sanford Center for Aging, American Red Cross, Alzheimer's Association, Respite Care Support Groups, Parkinson's Association, State of Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD) and others in addition to city, county and state social service agencies and other local non-profits.

New volunteers receive orientation and training from NV Rural RSVP Program staff or their local Volunteer Field Representative before being placed at a volunteer station. Volunteers attend annual elder abuse and driver's education and safety training. Annual and quarterly training events provide volunteers with engaging speakers and information about how to work with elderly clients on a wide variety of topics ranging from elder abuse, Alzheimer's disease, communication skills, COPD, diabetes, dealing with different personality types, CPR training, legal issues relating to senior citizens, and much more so that volunteers can continue to provide high quality in-home companionship, Respite care, escorted transportation, and Lifeline telephone system installations and maintenance services to frail, homebound seniors.

Volunteer Field Representatives and volunteers have an opportunity during these training sessions to share ideas and relate information on their particular volunteer activity, any challenges they face, and how they have overcome barriers to their service. Community volunteer station supervisors actively participate in the education sessions and learn from meaningful face-to-face dialog with a variety of community volunteers.

According to ADSD "2012-2016 State Plan, Appendix B: Nevada Geographic and Demographic Data",

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in the decade 2000 to 2010, Nevada's population of adults age 60 and older increased by 56.3 percent to 475,283, an increase of 171,212 seniors compared with only a 22 percent increase of this age group nationwide. Nevada's seniors age 85 and older increased 77.7 percent to 30,187, an increase of 13,198 seniors compared with only a 29.75 percent increase of this age group nationwide. Additionally, Nevada is rapidly becoming more diverse racially, ethnically and culturally; persons in Nevada self-identifying as a minority increased by 84 percent in the 2010 census.

NV Rural RSVP considers the demographics of the community served and makes every effort to recruit a volunteer pool reflective of the community served. NV Rural RSVP does not discriminate in the selection of volunteers or those to receive services based upon race, color, creed, belief, religion, sex, national origin, age, or political affiliation. NV Rural RSVP will continue its efforts to find effective mechanisms to reach minority individuals, members of Native American tribes, and persons with disabilities, as well as veterans and military family members.

NV Rural RSVP Program Coordinator and Volunteer Field Representatives perform "volunteer checkups" annually to ensure that volunteers are satisfied with their station assignments. Volunteers are also encouraged to communicate regularly with their Volunteer Field Representative or Program Coordinator to discuss an issue or if they are interested in volunteering at another volunteer station.

NV Rural RSVP provides holiday celebrations annually and volunteer recognition events biennially to provide volunteers with the confidence that they are truly supported and appreciated by NV Rural RSVP and the communities and senior clients they so unselfishly serve.

Recognition events bring in over 450 volunteers from several Nevada counties to a multi-county celebration where they receive certificates of appreciation for their volunteer service, with several volunteers receiving recognition from the Nevada Congressional delegation for exemplary service in the prior year. Some members of our congressional delegation send videos congratulating our volunteers. Members of the media are invited and thanked. Christmas celebrations are arranged annually with approximately 400 volunteers in attendance. Volunteer Field Representatives in each county arrange local celebrations for their volunteers in service. Local businesses donate door prizes.

### **Program Management**

The Executive Director, Program Coordinator, Volunteer and Stations Manager, and Volunteer Field

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Representatives coordinate volunteer opportunities that enhance the capabilities of local public agencies, other private non-profit organizations, and proprietary health care organizations to meet community needs, while providing volunteers with an interesting and fulfilling experience. Prior to placement of volunteers, volunteer stations enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NV Rural RSVP, thus establishing a working relationship and mutual responsibilities. The MOU identifies prohibited activities, outlines the reimbursement for transportation and/or meal expenses for the volunteers assigned to the station, limitations to placement, termination of volunteers process, and terms of the MOU which includes that it shall be in effect for a period of three years. Volunteer stations are provided a copy of NV Rural RSVP "Volunteer Station Handbook" that outlines compliance with RSVP program regulations and the station's responsibility in support of NV Rural RSVP volunteers, such as complying with all applicable civil rights laws and regulations including reasonable accommodation for NV Rural RSVP volunteers with disabilities. Volunteer station responsibilities include requests for volunteer services using the Agency Volunteer Request Form, assign and supervise volunteers, and provide volunteers with pre-service orientation and in-service training. Additionally, the volunteer station assists with or helps to arrange for transportation and meals, when possible, and provides for volunteer recognition, volunteer safety, record keeping and preparing reports required by NV Rural RSVP. The volunteer station supervisor undertakes such other responsibilities as may be necessary to the successful performance of NV Rural RSVP volunteers in their assignments or as agreed to in the Memorandum of Understanding.

The NV Rural RSVP Volunteer and Stations Manager oversees each partner non-profit organization, proprietary health care facility, and public agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and, along with the Volunteer Field Representatives, ensures that volunteers can manage the responsibilities outlined in the MOU prior to volunteer placement. Regular communication or visits to partnering organizations are conducted to assist with the volunteer management issues, time reports, MOU compliance, and volunteer activities. Volunteer station MOU's and activities are tracked in NV Rural RSVP's in-house database, Volunteer Reporter.

Working with our partners and utilizing existing internal, state agencies and communities assessments, NV Rural RSVP is informed of the needs of the communities we serve and develops strategies to respond to those needs using the resources of NV Rural RSVP's Community Advisory Group and volunteers. NV Rural RSVP conducts ongoing evaluation of the program

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accomplishments and identifies how they meet the identified needs of the communities.

NV Rural RSVP Program staff and Volunteer Field Representatives regularly recruit senior volunteers over the age of 55 for the Healthy Futures activities. In the event NV Rural RSVP or a volunteer station decides to terminate or not renew an MOU after three years, NV Rural RSVP makes every effort to place volunteers in another assignment where they can share their experience, abilities, and skills.

NV Rural RSVP is a self-sponsored 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization with a volunteer Board of Directors that has been serving the 15 rural counties of Nevada for over 41 years. NV Rural RSVP increases the impact of national service on community needs with outcomes in Healthy Futures through its innovative approach to providing independent living services to seniors and 24/7 caregivers and their loved-ones. Utilizing senior citizen volunteers who are trained to deliver a comprehensive support system, frail and homebound clients are assisted with basic needs through independent living programs that allow them to live independently and at home with dignity.

Measuring performance in the primary focus area: Healthy Futures, is conducted via client pre and post-indicator surveys, annual client surveys, monthly volunteer time reports and Volunteer Field Representative monthly activity reports. Client survey results are posted to and then analyzed utilizing a survey software program. Volunteer data from time reports is posted to the in-house Volunteer Reporter database software program, and service data on clients is posted to the Nevada State Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) client services program and our in-house Excel tracking system. All data is used for real-time tracking and reporting. Evaluation of data is conducted by key staff that is charged with oversight and reporting responsibilities.

Client survey and client reports from SAMS, Volunteer Reporter, and Excel Tracking system provide an excellent assessment of project accomplishments including the community impact of keeping seniors independent and out of costly institutions. Volunteer data from Volunteer Reporter monitors activities performed, hours served, and out-of-pocket expenses. Through monthly reporting from the Program Coordinator, the Executive Director can easily track the progress of all programs to ensure that NV Rural RSVP resources are being effectively used based on project budgets and objectives.

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NV Rural RSVP's Advisory Council is comprised of NV Rural RSVP Volunteer Field Representatives who are community members knowledgeable about rural Nevada community needs, its demographics, and seniors. The Advisory Council assists the Executive Director and staff with its administrative and program responsibilities including community outreach, education, fund-raising, publicity and programming for impact.

Working with our partners and utilizing existing internal, state agencies, and communities assessments, NV Rural RSVP is informed of the needs of the communities we serve and develops strategies to respond to those needs. NV Rural RSVP conducts ongoing evaluation of the program accomplishments and identifies how they meet the identified needs of the communities.

The Executive Director, Volunteer and Stations Manager, and volunteer Field Representatives coordinate volunteer opportunities that enhance the capabilities of local public agencies, non-profit organizations, and proprietary health organizations to meet community needs, while providing volunteers with an interesting and fulfilling experience. In the same vein, the community need of helping seniors live independently and in their own homes allows volunteers to serve seniors on a more personal basis. Seniors receive life-saving assistance with their everyday basic needs which contributes to their quality of life and enables them to avoid costly and unnecessary institutionalization. These volunteers experience the fulfillment of significantly impacting the lives of hundreds of seniors in a most extraordinary way by literally changing their lives for the better every day which allows them to live independently.

New volunteers complete a NV Rural RSVP volunteer application and receive orientation and training from NV Rural RSVP Program Staff or their local NV Rural RSVP Field Representative before being placed as a volunteer in their community. All NV Rural RSVP volunteers are placed in stations that have signed the required MOU that is renegotiated every three years. Prior to placing a volunteer in a workstation, NV Rural RSVP staff or Field Representatives review workstation opportunities with the volunteer to ensure that they are placed in work station programs significant to the volunteer and that are able to put the volunteer's unique talents and lifetime of experience to work. NV Rural RSVP then coordinates volunteer placement with the volunteer's workstation of choice and monitors placement through monthly volunteer timesheets and communication with station supervisor.

### **Organizational Capability**

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Established in 1973, NV Rural RSVP is a self-sponsored non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that has a demonstrated record of outstanding service to the elderly and other citizens in need of assistance in Nevada for over 41 years. NV Rural RSVP is governed by a seven-member volunteer Board of Directors and currently has eight full-time and three part-time employees and 15 Volunteer Field Representatives across the state. NV Rural RSVP serves 15 rural Nevada Counties, which are in rural and frontier regions with little or no services available. The proposed project activities are desperately needed to strengthen and expand NV Rural RSVP's volunteer services and independent living programs. NV Rural RSVP has longstanding relationships between volunteers, senior clients, community partners, agencies, families, neighbors, and friends of seniors and disabled persons. NV Rural RSVP has signed Memoranda of Understanding with the University of Reno Sanford Center for Aging and the Alzheimer's Association as well as other partnerships and collaborations with other non-profit organizations and government agencies. These partnerships and collaborations are key to training volunteers, serving our clients, and to effectively serving our communities.

NV Rural RSVP has the infrastructure in place to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight and day-to-day operational support to ensure compliance with RSVP program requirements. NV Rural RSVP's financial management system (system) complies with the financial management responsibilities as specified in OMB Circulars A-87, A-110, A-122, and A-133. The system is capable of distinguishing expenditures attributable to the terms and conditions of each federal and state grant, and any other funding source which requires reporting. The system identifies costs by programmatic year and budget category and includes standard accounting practices, sufficient internal controls, budget/expense management controls, and a clear audit trail. NV Rural RSVP continues to successfully undergo independent audits, program evaluations by the Corporation for National & Community Service, and the State of Nevada Aging and Disability Services program assessments. Audits have been without exceptions or management letters.

Program recognition includes "Outstanding Community Service" awards from the United Way, American Red Cross, Chambers of Commerce; the Governor's award for "Outstanding Non-Profit Organization in Nevada", and a Congressional Senate Labor/HHS award for outstanding work in assisting seniors in rural areas to remain in their own homes. Several NV Rural RSVP volunteers have also received the "Outstanding Rural Counties Volunteer" award from the Governor's "Points of Light."

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The following staff will ensure the accomplishment of the program objectives: Aging in Place

Susan C. Haas, Executive Director & C.E.O.

Under the direction of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director & C.E.O. has overall strategic and operational responsibility for NV Rural RSVP's nonprofit organization. Director & C.E.O. provides leadership of staff, directs programs, and provides for sustainability, expansion, and execution of NV Rural RSVP's mission. Director and C.E.O. decides on and builds the culture, sets the strategy and vision of the organization, provides team building, capital allocation, and sets budgets within the organization. Director works cooperatively with NV Rural RSVP staff, community Advisory Group members, and officials of the Corporation for National & Community Service in program planning, implementation, and reporting.

Kristine Hughes, Program Coordinator:

Under the direction of the Executive Director, the Program Coordinator coordinates program staff and 15 Volunteer Field Representatives; coordinates the Home Companion, Escorted Transportation, Respite Care, and Lifeline Programs; performs project oversight; makes seniors aware of our programs of assistance through community outreach; meets with, registers and evaluates client needs; and develops client service plans. The Program Coordinator conducts ongoing program and site visits and meetings with field staff and stations to ensure programmatic and fiscal compliance and client/volunteer satisfaction.

Lauren Jones, Volunteer and Stations Manager:

Under the direction of the Executive Director and in coordination with the Volunteer Field Representatives, the Volunteer and Stations Manager oversees all each NV Rural RSVP volunteer stations Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), insures that volunteers can manage the responsibilities outlined in the MOUs prior to volunteer placement, ensures that MOU's are up-to-date and complete, and conducts regular visits to NV Rural RSVP's partnering organizations to assist with volunteer management issues, time reports, MOU compliance, and volunteer activities.

Kathy Hanson, Respite Program Coordinator:

Under the direction of the Executive Director, the Respite Coordinator provides overall support for the

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Respite Care Program and collaborates with the Volunteer Field Representatives to recruit, train and place respite care volunteers with 24 caregivers and their loved-ones; conducts client intakes; tracks monthly time reports; and assists with the coordination of quarterly training events.

Tannis Andrews-Causey, Transportation and Lifeline Programs Coordinator: Under the direction of the Executive Director, the Transportation and Lifeline Programs' Coordinator provides transportation coordination, transportation client intakes, driver match, volunteer driver orientation and training. Additionally provides Lifeline Program coordination which involves ordering and tracking all lifeline units provided to all of the Volunteer Field Representatives, scheduling installation and repairs of Lifeline units in seniors' homes, responding to Lifeline questions, and monitoring incident reports transmitted from Lifeline headquarters.

Lora Myles, CARE Law Program Attorney:

Under the Director of the Executive Director, CARE Law Program pro bono attorney provides Nevada rural counties' seniors with representation in elder abuse cases, Powers of Attorney, estate planning, assistance with creditor issues, and assistance with guardianships and spousal set-asides.

Donna Dorris, Controller:

Under the direction of the Executive Director, the Controller manages the project budget and ensures compliance with reporting requirements per funding agreement. NV Rural RSVP audits have been without exceptions or management letters.

NV Rural RSVP's internal policy and operating procedures (P&P) manual has been in place since NV Rural RSVP became a self-sponsored, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization in 1992. The P&P manual includes risk management policies and procedures covering projects and activities, such as provisions of appropriate insurance coverage for NV Rural RSVP volunteers and vehicles; established record keeping and reporting systems that ensure quality program and fiscal operations; non-discrimination policy; personnel management; and purchasing. The P&P manual is reviewed and updated annually, or sooner, if necessary. Three informational handbooks have been developed for new volunteers, employees and volunteer stations: 1) "NV Rural RSVP Volunteer Handbook", 2) "NV Rural RSVP Employee Handbook", and 3) "Volunteer Stations Handbook."

## **Other**

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N/A

**PNS Amendment (if applicable)**

N/A