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Executive Summary

An estimated 250 RSVP volunteers will serve in Herkimer County, administering to the needs of the frail elderly, the homebound, the economically disadvantaged, children, and veterans. Volunteers will be engaged in food distribution at one of nine emergency feeding programs and one food co-op; transportation of the frail elderly, the disabled, and veterans to doctor and hospital appointments; companionship and respite services for the homebound, frail elderly, and veterans; distribution of materials and enrollments for clients needing health insurance and prescription coverage; and tutoring in an after-school program for grades 1-2.

The primary focus area is Healthy Futures. The other or secondary focus area is Education.

At the end of the three-year grant, low-income clients assisted by RSVP volunteers will report increased household food security, together with savings that will enable them to pay other bills; the frail elderly, disabled, and veterans will report increased social ties and perceived social support, together with an ability to maintain and/or improve their health status and age-in-place; seniors will experience improved medical and prescription coverage affording them access to care; while students in grades 1-2 will demonstrate improved academic engagement.

Volunteers will accept assignments in one of twenty-seven stations located throughout Herkimer County, including the towns of Herkimer, Ilion, Frankfort, Newport, Dolgeville, Little Falls, Old Forge, Van Hornesville, and West Winfield. Two stations, located in Oneida County, have satellite offices in Herkimer County where our RSVP volunteers serve.

The CNCS federal investment of \$49,044 will be supplemented by \$21,019 in non-federal resources.

Strengthening Communities

Herkimer County is located in central New York State, situated northwest of Albany and east of Syracuse. The northern part of the county is in the Adirondack State Park, and the Mohawk River flows across the southern part of the county. Herkimer County is bordered by St. Lawrence County to the north, Otsego County to the south, Hamilton, Fulton and Montgomery Counties to the east, and Lewis and Oneida Counties to the west. There are nineteen towns, ten villages, and one city in Herkimer County. 14 percent of the land (136,600 acres) is used in farming. The majority of the

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county's 64,181 residents live in the towns, villages and city that surround the Mohawk River, referred to as the Mohawk Valley Corridor. The county seat is the Village of Herkimer, which is home to the county's only community college.

With regard to Herkimer County's demographics relating to aging and poverty, 23 percent of the total population is age 60 and older, ranking the county 10 out of 62 in the State for its aged population. The fastest growing population is those 85 and older, now estimated to be 11 percent of Herkimer County's seniors. 96.7 percent of the county's population is white, non-Hispanic. Poverty is a significant issue facing area residents, with 14.6 percent living below the poverty level. Of these, 23.1 percent are children and 11.8 percent are seniors. (Statistics taken from the 2013 U.S. Census update; the 2012 Herkimer County Risk Assessment Profile; the 2012 Herkimer County Poverty Profile)

With regard to its industry, agriculture is an important aspect of the communities' economy, culture, and way of life. However, Herkimer County continues to lose its dairy farms (an additional 4 percent from 2009 to 2012). The losses have been attributed to decreased government subsidies, skyrocketing supply costs, and decreasing asset values. In just one year, approximately 6,000 contacts were made to Farm Net, an organization working with local distressed farm families.

In Herkimer County, private industry makes up 71.8 percent of employment and 68.7 percent of its total payroll. Trade, Transportation and Utilities comprise the largest employment sector in the county followed by the Manufacturing sector. The Manufacturing sector also has the highest average annual pay of any private employment sector. However, between 2003 and 2008, Herkimer County experienced a 29 percent loss of its manufacturing employment base. The decline continued through 2011, with Herkimer showing a 15.7 percent loss in manufacturing between 2006 and 2011.

Job losses mean unemployment. As a result of the national recession which began in 2009, unemployment figures in Herkimer County rose from 6.2 percent in 2008 to 8.0 percent the following year. They climbed to 8.8 percent in 2012, slightly higher than the state and national averages. If people are unemployed or underemployed, they must live without some basic necessities and/or they must depend upon some type of public assistance or community safety net programs. Emergency feeding programs in Herkimer County reported a 25 percent increase in clients served between 2007 and 2013. The Department of Social Services reported a 99 percent jump in food stamp cases between

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the same period, 2007 and 2013. Kateri's Thrift Store, a program which provides clothing for low-income households, reported a 20 percent increase in clients served during this same period.

In addition to working families, many seniors are reporting having difficulty meeting their most basic living expenses (31 percent of seniors live below 200 percent of the poverty level in Herkimer County). Seniors can suffer from serious health issues that restrict their ability to perform activities of daily living such as driving, housekeeping, and even their own personal care. Many of them live alone due to the death of their partner; this usually results in a decrease of household income, sometimes a very dramatic income loss that can result in a myriad of aftereffects (27.3 percent live alone). The Herkimer County Office for the Aging reports that only 4.9 percent of seniors reside in nursing homes, with another 1.0 percent in other group quarters. The remaining 94.1 percent are attempting to age-in-place within their local communities. Care for the elderly very often falls to their adult children who may also have the responsibility for providing care for their own children and/or grandchildren. This phenomenon is often referred to as the 'sandwich generation'. The number of age 80 plus people per 100 people age 50-64 constitutes the parent support ratio. The higher the number, the less family support exists for seniors. Only two counties in New York State reported a greater parent support ratio than Herkimer County. Although there are programs to assist seniors, a number of factors can limit either the senior's ability to access these services or the ability of these services to adequately meet their needs. Then too, funding cuts have created waiting lists for many of the services provided by local agencies. As a result of its considerable elderly population, Herkimer County is presented with unique challenges and opportunities well ahead of the rest of the nation. The areas of Health Care, Elder Care, Poverty and Quality of Life are impacted greatly by current changes. (Statistics above taken from Herkimer County Office for Aging 4-Year Plan: April 2012 to March 2016)

To further study the issues affecting Herkimer County residents, a series of six Profile Life Area Focus Groups were conducted with community stakeholders in March 2013 to review the data included in the 2012 Herkimer County Risk Assessment Profile, and to identify priority needs. Out of this process, the county identified priority areas of focus, some of which included: Transportation - access to healthcare and other vital needs; Economic Security - continuous safety net of support services that are non stigmatized and adequately resourced; Physical and Emotional Health - obesity and nutrition to prevent chronic disease; Stigma Support - support those who have difficulty requesting assistance with no stigma; Community - caregiving for older adults; Education - proficiency and performance in

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school. These and other priority areas were presented to the ICP Leadership Committee and will be used by this and other groups to identify strategies that reduce risks, address needs, and improve outcomes in select areas of focus.

This recent study has assisted the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of Herkimer County to align its stations, as well as its volunteers, with the priority needs identified by the Herkimer County Integrated County Planning Committee's assessment of the county. These identified needs align also with the Corporation for National and Community Service Focus Area, Healthy Futures, as outlined below.

Transportation to access healthcare: The RSVP RIDE program uses volunteers to serve as dispatchers and drivers to provide medical transportation to the non-Medicaid and ambulatory senior, veteran, and disabled populations, age 55 and older, to appointments within a 70-mile radius of the county. This service enables this vulnerable population to age in place, maintain and/or improve their current health status, and to report having increased social ties and perceived social support. The RSVP RIDE program serves to supplement and enhance the transportation services provided by the local Herkimer County Office for the Aging who reported in their 4-Year Plan: April 2012 to March 2016 that "the need for transportation services for seniors is well understood" and that "OFA receives many requests for rides that they cannot provide because the demand is so high."

Economic Security - continuous safety net of support services; Physical and Emotional Health - obesity and nutrition to prevent chronic disease; Stigma Support - support those who have difficulty requesting assistance with no stigma: The RSVP Program will continue to address these issues identified by the county by recruiting and training volunteers to serve as food pantry coordinators and pantry workers in all of the ten emergency feeding programs located throughout the county, including one food co-op. These volunteers will provide direct service to low-income households, generally providing food packages for each member of the household for three meals a day for five days. RSVP food pantry coordinators have been trained by the Food Bank of Central New York to provide menus based on the new food pyramid stressing fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products. Both volunteers and coordinators will receive on-going training from the Food Bank of Central New York covering food safety and handling issues, as well as sensitivity training to deal with the issues and needs of the clients they serve. As a result of this intervention, volunteers will address the CNCS objective Obesity

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and Food, and low-income households will report increased food security for themselves and their children.

Community - caregiving for older adults: RSVP volunteers will assist seniors, the disabled, and veterans to age-in-place in their homes by providing companionship services, transportation to social and medical appointments, light housekeeping, meal preparation, shopping with and for clients, respite services for family members, and telephone reassurance. As a result, older adults, veterans, and people with disabilities will report, as an outcome, increased social ties and perceived social support through this CNCS-supported service.

The RVSP program will continue to recruit and train volunteers for the Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP). These volunteers have successfully completed their 2014 annual recertification exams through the New York State Office for the Aging. RSVP volunteers will help seniors, veterans, and the disabled access health care by providing information and enrollments into healthcare and/or prescription drug plans. Low-income households will be assisted through low-income subsidy (LIS) programs. These RSVP HIICAP volunteers will address both the county's, as well as CNCS's, objective, i.e., access to care. Clients will report that they were better able to make an informed decision after counseling with a HIICAP volunteer. Clients will also report saving money, especially through enrollments into low-income (LIS) subsidy programs.

Education - proficiency and performance in school: RSVP volunteers will continue to serve as tutors in two school districts in Herkimer County, providing one-on-one tutoring to youngsters in grades 1-2 through the America Reads after-school program. RSVP volunteers will address the CNCS objective K-12 success and will report on the number of students with improved academic engagement.

76 percent of current unduplicated RSVP volunteers are serving under the CNCS Primary Focus Area: Healthy Futures. By 2018, that number will increase to 81 percent of unduplicated RSVP volunteers. 73 percent of current unduplicated RSVP volunteers are serving in work plans that result in outcomes. We project that percentage will increase to 86 percent by the end of the 2018 grant year.

Data collection and recordkeeping is imperative to the successful operation and evaluation of Herkimer County's RSVP Program. All emergency feeding programs, including the food co-op, keep

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records on each household served. Seven of the nine pantries report these figures each month directly to the program director. The remaining two food pantries are contacted by the RSVP office. These monthly reports include the total households, individuals, men, women, children, and meals served. RSVP RIDE dispatchers keep records on all clients accepted into the program, while the program director and/or program assistant reviews monthly all timesheets and mileage reimbursement request forms received from the volunteers. These timesheets include the date of transport, the client's name, destination, distance covered, and hours donated. Companion outreach volunteers also have timesheets which report hours served, the names of the clients assisted, and the service code reflecting the activities performed. HII CAP volunteers must keep very detailed records of their clients including an intake form and copies of all materials related to the case. HII CAP phone logs are kept updated on the computer system and downloaded monthly for data input. All client contacts under the HII CAP program, together with phone logs, must be entered into SHIPTalk by RSVP volunteers monthly, giving an accurate picture of clients counseled and services provided by the volunteers. Coordinators for the America Reads program must keep attendance sheets for the students and timesheets for the volunteers, as well as a student profile for each student in the program. All this data collection gives the program director a clear picture of who our volunteers are, the amount of time they are volunteering, the service activities they are performing, a profile on the clients they are assisting, and a snap shot of the assistance being provided. Donations received in support of programming are also tracked, and thank you letters are generated as a formal acknowledgement to clients assisted through these outreach programs.

One of the most important pieces to data collection outside of outputs is outcomes. This answers the important question: Are we achieving the goals that we set out to accomplish through the service activity? In order to record the outcomes for Healthy Futures, client satisfaction surveys were developed and distributed to all RIDE and HII CAP clients, as well as to nine emergency feeding programs. Under Community Priorities, surveys were distributed to clients served at two thrift stores: Kateri's in Little Falls and the Mission Boutique in Old Forge. Under Other Focus Areas, students attending the after-school America Reads tutoring program were also surveyed. Tutors helped students complete the Youth Reading Self-Assessment Survey, while teachers completed the Teacher Evaluation Form. These survey instruments will be revised in 2015 to reflect the new outcomes of the Corporation. In the near future, surveys will also be developed for the Companion Outreach Program, HOPE Ministries, as well as the Food Co-op Program, Food Sense. Close to 900 surveys

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were returned and reviewed in 2014. RSVP staff tabulated and reported outcomes to CNCS. All surveys and survey results are kept on file in the RSVP office.

The RSVP Program of Herkimer County services veterans. RSVP has recruited twenty-one veterans who now volunteer on assignments in their communities. Over a twelve-month period, our program assisted fifty-seven veterans through our Health Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP), and fifteen veterans through our RSVP RIDE Transportation Program. Unfortunately, we do not request information on veterans served through our food pantries. These pantries assisted over 11,000 households (duplicated count) in 2013. Beginning in the fall of 2014, the RSVP Program of Herkimer County will work with the coordinators of the county's food pantries, many of whom attend the bimonthly meetings of the Ecumenical Food and Shelter Council, to ask them to develop a questionnaire so that an accurate count can be obtained on the number of veterans being served through the county's emergency feeding programs. We will also be working more closely with the Herkimer County Hunger Coalition who has spearheaded a number of projects aimed at assisting veterans.

Recruitment and Development

Volunteers, now more than ever, are appreciated and viewed as a valuable community resource. The work cannot be done without them. Not only do communities depend upon volunteers, but agencies, in an effort to relieve the high demand for client services, now are seeking them to train for skilled positions. Building a strong volunteer program is done one brick at a time. If one volunteer has a positive and fulfilling work experience, then he will bring in another, and so on. Recruiting by 'word of mouth' is our most effective recruitment tool. Secondly, the personal 'ask' is likewise successful. We have often found that people do not volunteer because they themselves have never been asked. When we spot someone among our contacts who has the qualifications we are looking for, we ask them to drop by the office. Thirdly, we involve our active volunteers, especially our volunteer leaders, to do the 'ask' for us. They know the job description from their personal experience. They also know those individuals who are available and skilled in their communities. Volunteer leaders often have registration packets available when they approach these potential volunteers. Lastly, publicity in church bulletins, and success stories in the local media have gained attention and glean some additional volunteers.

Technology cannot be overlooked. The RSVP Program of Herkimer County currently has a website,

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www.herkimercountyrsvp.org. The program director is working with Huther Advertising to update the site, making it more interactive. Volunteer applications, the RSVP Handbook, and video clips of local volunteers in action will be some of the new website features. The RSVP director has recently spoken with the agency's new executive director, Deanna Charles, regarding setting up a Facebook account for the agency's programs. Meetings are already scheduled to make this a reality, enabling the RSVP program to post events, as well as highlight a volunteer each quarter for additional recognition.

Similar to our sponsor, Catholic Charities, the RSVP program works to recruit and respond to all persons regardless of race, creed or lifestyle. The program seeks to protect its vulnerable clients by requiring background checks, motor vehicle checks, and VIRTUS training for those volunteers who will work one-on-one with our frail seniors or our young children. In Herkimer County, 96.7 percent of the population is white, non-Hispanic. However, the county is beginning to see a slow influx of African American, Hispanic, and Asian populations. Our program welcomes all who are willing to lend a hand. Although currently eight percent of our volunteers are veterans, the goal for the 2015-2018 grant years is to increase that number to ten percent. With regard to recruiting people with disabilities, it is estimated that forty-two percent of our current volunteers are over the age of seventy-five. These volunteers continue to remain active while coping with limitations and various disabilities. As one volunteer commented, "If I stop (volunteering), I'll die." Their love for what they do keeps them young-at-heart and active, despite their disabilities.

Once volunteers are recruited and have passed the background check, orientation is done by the program director and/or a designated station supervisor. Information is given to the volunteer concerning the mission, confidentiality requirements, insurance coverage, reporting and timesheets, and various opportunities with a special emphasis on the program's primary focus area, Healthy Futures, and secondary or other focus area, Education. Each volunteer assignment is unique, responding directly to the objectives and desired outcomes of the assignment. What potential volunteers want to hear is that they will receive the necessary training, support, and coaching they will need before going solo on an assignment. Some volunteers will couple with an experienced volunteer and shadow them until they feel comfortable with the assignment. All potential volunteers are encouraged to bring their questions to the program director at any time during the enrollment process, as well as once an assignment begins.

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Training is imperative for volunteers, especially for those engaged in highly skilled activities. Under our Primary Focus Area: Healthy Futures, volunteers are recruited and trained for the following assignments:

Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (Access to Care). As counselors, these volunteers are invited to attend monthly conference calls and semi-annual regional trainings, as well as study and review manuals provided by the HII CAP Program Coordinator. HII CAP volunteers continue on-going training with their supervisor in preparation for their private counseling sessions, as well as for their annual certification exam through the New York State Office for the Aging. Many HII CAP volunteers come into the program as clerical assistants. They assemble packets, create files, and do data entry. Through this experience, they gain the confidence to request training as a HII CAP counselor. Because these volunteers work and train so closely together, they form a family. These interpersonal relationships greatly enhance the quality of their own lives. It is not uncommon for a volunteer to remark: 'I love HII CAP', not only for what they give to the program and its clients, but also for what they receive from it. HII CAP volunteers know they are special. This is the only program in Herkimer County that provides clients with free, confidential, one-on-one counseling with a client on all issues concerning healthcare and prescription insurance, billing, Medicare, Medicaid, low-income subsidy programs, EPIC, fraud and abuse, prevention, enrollments and disenrollments.

Volunteers assigned as food pantry coordinators and pantry associates (Obesity and Food), receive their training from the Food Bank of Central New York on food safety, nutrition, client choice, ordering, grant writing, client sensitivity, reporting, and food handling. The RSVP Program Director hosts bimonthly meetings of the Ecumenical Food and Shelter Council at which food pantry coordinators and area agencies exchange information and share best practices. RSVP also sponsors county meetings to which the Food Bank of Central New York sends representatives to further train food pantry coordinators and workers. The Food Bank also hosts an annual training and recognition event in the fall, open to all pantry volunteers. Volunteers learn about the benefits their community receives from their service activity when client satisfaction survey results are annually reviewed with them. Many food pantry volunteers first accept assignments into the program as baggers, preparing the food packages for clients. Often they advance to volunteer coordinator and/or food pantry coordinator positions. Some food pantries in the county have a trained team of coordinators to

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provide coverage in case of illness and/or vacations. These nine emergency feeding programs serviced by RSVP volunteers, and serving as a safety net for low-income households, are the only community food pantries in the county.

Volunteers assigned to the RSVP RIDE Program (Aging in Place) receive on-site training from the RSVP Program Director. Dispatchers learn how to maintain the logs, client registrations, timesheets, drivers' schedules, and provider log. These volunteers are further instructed on the program guidelines, policies and procedures, and contact information, and they have recourse to the program director when problems arise. Timesheets, as well as mileage reimbursement forms, donation cards, CIMA insurance information, mission and confidentiality, Sheriff's ID badge, background and motor vehicle checks, are all covered in the initial meeting. The AARP 55 Alive Driver Safety Course is offered to volunteers, free of charge, once every three years. Some of our volunteers will first start in the program as dispatchers and, over time, graduate to serve as drivers. All RSVP RIDE volunteers know the significance of this program. It is the only program in Herkimer County that offers seniors, 55 and older, transportation, with no required fee, to appointments located outside of Herkimer County, within a 70 mile radius. It is the only program for the senior non-Medicaid population that transports dialysis patients. It is also the only transportation program in Herkimer County that provides door-through-door service for clients who reside in the more rural areas of the northeastern and southern tier of Herkimer County.

The final group of volunteers under the Primary Focus Area, Healthy Futures, is our HOPE Ministry volunteers (Aging in Place). These volunteers provide one-on-one support to the frail elderly, the homebound, and their caregivers. Although a relatively new program, these volunteers have received the necessary information on confidentiality, background and motor vehicle checks, recordkeeping, and contract assignments. Volunteers attended an all-day training sponsored by the Albany Diocese Caregivers Program. This diocesan program is seen as a future resource for trainings and materials for HOPE Ministries. As the program grows, volunteers will evolve into leadership roles including intake workers and coordinators for the program. The Herkimer County Office for the Aging director recently said: "When you are ready, let us know." We expect a number of additional referrals from this agency.

Under the Other Focus Areas: Education, American Reads volunteers (K-12 Success) gather at the

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beginning of each school year to receive orientation and training from the RSVP Program Director, as well as from experts in the field. Retired teachers, who serve as RSVP site coordinators for the program, further instruct the tutors on location and provide guidance and resources for them. These tutors are informed by the classroom teachers as to the specific needs of their students and see firsthand the impact their sessions have by year's end.

Volunteers, who may work in community priority areas such as thrift store clerks, congregate meal site assistants, blood drive volunteers, crafters, administrative assistants, board and/or advisory council members, receive their training directly from the station supervisor. For some assignments, shadowing experienced volunteers is strongly suggested.

Volunteer recognition is ongoing with our program. Each day WBUG radio announces the birthdays of our volunteers in their morning program. In our quarterly newsletter, *Sharing the Spirit*, the names of all volunteers, who will be celebrating birthdays in the upcoming months, are posted. In addition, birthday cards are mailed from our office to all volunteers just prior to their special day. When volunteers are ill and the office is notified, get well cards are sent. For Christmas, cards are mailed out to all volunteers, while gift cards are given at certain times during the year to volunteer coordinators and those who help to run programs. This year, as in the past, Catholic Charities of the Albany Diocese has requested an RSVP volunteer from our program to be honored at its fall gala. Ralph Dow, a food pantry coordinator from Newport, will receive the honor. The RSVP program also sponsors an annual RSVP luncheon. For the past two years, CDPHP has underwritten the cost of the event. At the May 13th luncheon this year, representatives from Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Assemblywoman Claudia Tenney, U.S. Representative Richard Hanna, and Assemblyman Marc Butler's offices were present. Every year RSVP invites the Herkimer County Office for the Aging (OFA) to join us in recognizing volunteers with special honors. This year one of our RSVP volunteers received the OFA award for Outstanding Contributions. RSVP also honored three of its volunteers and two of its community partners at this event. Program booklets, favors, door prizes, and raffles enabled all the volunteers who attended to be recognized.

Retention of our volunteers is not a problem. Seventy-four percent of our current volunteers have been with the program for five or more years. Once a volunteer feels comfortable in an assignment, they become committed. If volunteers do terminate from the program, it is almost always because of

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health issues with themselves or a member of their family. Volunteers also have easy access to the program director, so that potential issues can be discussed and resolved before they become problems.

Program Management

The program director develops a Memorandum of Understanding with each of its RSVP stations. In this contract, examples of activities that are prohibited by the Corporation are clearly outlined. These activities include prohibition on discrimination and/or involvement in religious, sectarian, or political activities and/or the displacement of employed workers. The responsibilities of both parties are also outlined in the agreement. MOU's are renewed every three years and can be amended or terminated in writing at any time at the request of either party. Each station must also develop a job description for their potential volunteers. These job descriptions are reviewed by the program director to insure compliance with the Corporation's guidelines and the service activities of the focus area. The supervisor for the volunteers must be designated on the MOU's, as well as the number of volunteers needed to successfully meet the objectives of the project.

During the period between 2012 and 2013, the RSVP program director redesigned the RSVP project to meet the new CNCS focus areas as they pertain to Herkimer County, as well as to respond to the identified needs outlined in the 2012 Herkimer County Risk Assessment Profile. The result was the adoption of Healthy Futures as the primary focus area for the RSVP Project. This focus now includes emergency feeding programs to provide increased food security for households; transportation, visitation, and respite programs to increase social ties and perceived social support; and health insurance information and counseling to provide medical and pharmaceutical coverage for seniors and the uninsured. Education became the program's secondary focus, providing after-school tutoring for youngsters in grades 1-2 to improve their academic engagement within the classroom. Finally, the remaining programming was selected to address other identified community priorities which included: thrift stores enabling families to stretch their budgets and clothe their families; congregate meal sites providing food and socialization for the aging populations; blood drives to support this critical community health need; advisory council and board members to help direct non-profits; clerical volunteers to assist with programming; and crafters who provide clothing for newborns. The focus of the RSVP project continues to be working closely with the vulnerable populations in Herkimer County, that is, the socially isolated aged/infirm populations, school-age children, and needy families affected by Herkimer's depressed economy. Letters were sent out to all stations and volunteers, informing them of the 2012-2013 paradigm shift and the reasons for it. The program director spoke

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with the State office to negotiate the number of volunteers for the project. This was done with the goal of having 70 percent or more of RSVP volunteers in assignments addressing the identified critical needs of the community. Currently there are 76 percent of unduplicated RSVP volunteers in Healthy Future assignments. It is the program's goal to reach 81 percent by 2018.

Having a volunteer activity with a clear focus, together with stations gathered under the umbrella of that focus area, helps the program director to better track station and volunteer activity. Three examples of overseeing stations under the Healthy Futures umbrella:

Obesity and Food: The coordinators of the one hundred and fifty unduplicated RSVP volunteers, who work in one of the county's nine RSVP emergency feeding programs, and one food co-op, meet bimonthly to review and discuss the volunteer engagement and response to the ongoing needs in their communities. Other stakeholders in the community join them including the Herkimer County Office for the Aging (OFA), Food Bank of Central New York (FBCNY), Resource Center for Independent Living (RCIL), Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), Herkimer County Hunger Coalition (HCHC), Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP), Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program, all working together with the RSVP Program Director. This group forms the Herkimer County's Ecumenical Food and Shelter Council, which also serves as the Advisory Council to the RSVP Program. Up-to-date information on trends, programming, gaps in services, critical needs, and the effectiveness of our volunteer activities helps the RSVP program director shape the local program. This council also serves as a review board to assess the effectiveness of the RSVP project.

Aging in Place: The project director oversees the RSVP RIDE Program of Catholic Charities, answering the questions of the dispatchers and helping to set policy and procedures for the program. The director reviews timesheets and mileage reimbursement requests, client request forms, weekly transportation logs, driver schedules, cancellation schedules, and encourages collaborations with the Herkimer County Office for the Aging and Bernie Bus Transportation Services. Donations are promptly acknowledged. The director also recruits volunteers for the program, solicits sponsorships, as well as promotes the program within the community.

The HOPE Ministry volunteers, engaged in caregiving and respite services, work with the RSVP Program Director, who oversees the activities of the volunteers, insures that in-home contracts are on

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file, insures careful screening of potential volunteers, reviews timesheets and client matches for the program, and seeks linkages within the community for ongoing trainings. The director is also responsible for promoting this RSVP initiative within the community, including designing a program brochure.

Access to Care: Finally, the RSVP director works closely with the HII CAP Program (Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program) to insure that there are sufficient volunteers to keep up with the demand for services, and that these volunteers receive the necessary training and certification required by the State office.

K-12 Success - Other Focus Area: RSVP America Reads coordinators work directly with the program director to recruit, screen, train, and place tutors in the after-school tutoring program, and to track the activities and performance of the students enrolled in the program. Consequently, in each case, the program director's direct contact with RSVP volunteers and/or their coordinators, especially in the primary and other focus areas, insures that the volunteer assignments, that were designed to meet the service activity of the project, are indeed met.

For those stations under the umbrella of Community Priorities, the program director is in contact with coordinators and/or volunteers at least quarterly, to insure that volunteers are having a meaningful experience, reporting their hours, and that the job is getting done. The RSVP director realizes the need to continue recruiting volunteers to work especially in three community areas: congregate meal sites, thrift stores, and blood drives. As other needs surface, and as funding allows, the RSVP project will expand into those identified areas of need.

In an effort to highlight RSVP volunteer opportunities, as well as to encourage more seniors to join, the RSVP director will be visiting stations and reporting their stories in the RSVP newsletter, *Sharing the Spirit*, which is published in conjunction with the Herkimer County Office for the Aging. These stories will also be forwarded to the local media for publication, and included on our website www.herkimercountyrsvp.org.

Assessment of the project and measuring outputs and outcomes is vital to the Herkimer County RSVP program. All clients served under Healthy Futures and Education must register, enabling the

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program director to get an accurate count of all participants. Annually, the program director also asks the clients it assists: How are we doing? This is done through a massive client satisfaction survey distribution to all clients served in the following Healthy Futures focus areas: the RIDE transportation program, nine emergency feeding programs, and the Health Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program. Surveys are also distributed to clients served at two thrift stores, Kateri's in Little Falls, and Mission Boutique in Old Forge. Survey instruments will soon be designed and distributed to all HOPE Ministry clients, and to our food co-op clients in the Food Sense Program. Surveys are then collected, tallied by the RSVP program staff, and reported out to funding sources, RSVP volunteers, and the sponsoring agency. In 2014, nearly 900 surveys were tallied and helped to measure program outcomes, as well as the clients' overall satisfaction with the services provided. Outcomes in all of these aforementioned areas exceeded anticipated goals.

Recordkeeping is also critical to the success of the program. All volunteer folders were recently reviewed to insure compliance with CNCS regulations, including the 55 age requirement, as well as with our sponsor's criteria which requires a background check completed on all RSVP volunteers. All station MOU's were also reviewed and are up-to-date. These are renewed every three years. All RSVP stations are contacted quarterly to insure that timesheets are reported to the program. Only stations, with a MOU on file, receive timesheets. All potential RSVP volunteers receive necessary information about the program, age requirement, CIMA Insurance coverage, meal and/or mileage reimbursement, and volunteer recognition. All inactive RSVP volunteers are contacted quarterly to check on their status. When inactive volunteers are terminated, the RSVP files are updated.

In order to keep abreast of changing community needs, the RSVP Program Director serves on the Herkimer County Comprehensive Assessment Task Force which gathers statistics and information every three years for Herkimer County's Risk Assessment Profile. The program director also participates in quarterly meetings of the Cornell Cooperative Extension's Advisory Council, which brings together representatives from the county's human service field including: the Department of Social Services (DSS); Women, Children and Infants Program (WIC); Prenatal Care Assistance Program (PCAP); Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES); Head Start; and the Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency (MVCAA). The director serves on the board of the Grieving Persons Services, and represents Herkimer County on the HPNAP Advisory Board for the Food Bank of Central New York. In addition to the above, the director networks with numerous state and county

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agencies including: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); State Office for the Aging (SOFA); Social Security Administration (SSA); Bassett Healthcare Network; Medicare Rights Center (MRC); Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS); Herkimer County Health Net, Inc.; Empire Justice Center; Herkimer County Office for the Aging (OFA); Resource Center for Independent Living (RCIL); area schools; local parishes; local medical providers, and the local media.

The program's sponsor, Catholic Charities, has an established system of checks and balances. All donations that come into the program are logged by the receptionist before being transferred to the Accounting Department. Receipts of all donations are forwarded to the program director for acknowledgement. The program director meets with the fiscal director and the executive director quarterly to review, in depth, the line-item budget. The program director is able, at any time, to obtain a printout of the current budget showing all program income and expenditures. There is easy access to both the executive and fiscal directors, as well as the bookkeeper. The RSVP program director works with the Title V program, PathStone, and currently has two enrollees assigned to assist the project, each one working fifteen hours a week.

Organizational Capability

The relationship between a sponsoring agency and the local RSVP project is crucial. Catholic Charities of Herkimer County has been a strong supporter and advocate of the RSVP Program throughout its twenty-nine year history. As its sponsor, it has provided leadership training for the RSVP director, as well as technical and fiscal support for RSVP programming. Both the mission and goals of the agency closely dovetail with the impact programming objectives currently being implemented by the RSVP program. Catholic Charities has a thirty-four year history of successfully managing federal, state, and county grants. Its affiliation with both the United Way of the Valley and Greater Utica area, as well as the Herkimer County Integrated Planning Committee, insures that the agency has a firm understanding of both the community's identified needs, as well as the programs that can best impact those needs. With regard to fiscal accountability, the agency's repeated successful annual audit of its \$1.3 million budget speaks to its experience and ability to sponsor the RSVP project. In addition, the agency receives from Albany the Standards and Procedure Policies Manual which is adapted, as needed, to the needs of the local agency. These standards and policies are shared with all staff and will soon be on-line at the Albany website.

The RSVP Program Director is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the program. This includes

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recruiting volunteers, reviewing all application information and forwarding it on to the fiscal department for processing the background checks, together with motor vehicle checks and child registry checks as indicated. The director coordinates with the fiscal director for VIRTUS training for all RSVP volunteers assigned to work with children and/or vulnerable adults. Volunteers, who work in the office, are also required to obtain a Sheriff ID badge. They are assisted in this process by the program director.

The RSVP director reviews all request for mileage reimbursement, calculates payments, signs forms, and forwards these forms to the fiscal department for payment. All donations received by the program are first logged at the reception desk where receipts are issued to the program director. Acknowledgements are sent out by the program assistant. The fiscal department logs in all donations as income for the program. The director orders supplies and program materials, submitting invoices to the fiscal department for payment.

The RSVP director is responsible for all public relations for the program, and for the twelve-page RSVP newsletter, Sharing the Spirit, which is published quarterly in collaboration with the Herkimer County Office for the Aging. The annual RSVP recognition luncheon is planned and overseen by the program director. The director also develops fundraising alternatives for the RSVP program. This includes sharing information with the clients on the needs and benefits provided by the current programming and seeking their support. Currently, donations come into the program from the clients assisted through the RIDE program, as well as HOPE Ministries. Ad sponsorships assist with the cost of the quarterly newsletter, Sharing the Spirit. Ongoing sponsorships have been received from the Herkimer County Hunger Coalition for the America Reads after-school program, Herkimer County Health Net, Inc. for the RSVP RIDE Adopt-A-Driver Program, the Capital District Physicians Health Plan (CDPHP) for the RSVP luncheon, as well as for the RIDE program. Finally, the RSVP Program Director is responsible for writing and submitting grants and grant renewals to the Corporation for National and Community Service, the State Office for the Aging, and the United Way of the Valley and Greater Utica Area.

The RSVP Program Director supervises the RSVP Program Assistant, as well as the PathStone (Title V) enrollee and dispatchers for the RSVP RIDE Program. The director oversees the RSVP stations to insure compliance with program goals and CNCS regulations. This is done by regular contacts and/or

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visits to the sites, and monthly review of reports. The RSVP director meets quarterly with the executive director and again with the fiscal director. The line-item budget is reviewed, as well as progress towards the program's goals. Annually, the RSVP program director meets first with the Executive Director, and then with the Board of Directors, to present a complete year-end review of the project, complete with statistics. The current program director for the RSVP project in Herkimer County is Lydia Sexton. She has served in this capacity for twenty years. Over the years, the program director has successfully raised funds for the program through grant writing, fundraising, and soliciting donations and sponsorships.

The RSVP Program Assistant inputs data from all volunteer timesheets into the Volunteer Reporter, updates timesheets prior to quarterly mailings, updates files and rolodex with new volunteer information, completes the process for all new volunteer applications, contacts RSVP volunteers quarterly to check on their current status, and mails out MOU renewals as required. The program assistant oversees the mailing of monthly birthday cards to its volunteers, as well as informs WBUG radio of the birthdays to be announced each day. The program assistant helps to tabulate client satisfaction surveys for the program, and oversees all bulk mailings. Finally, the program assistant contacts all inactive volunteers quarterly. The current program assistant for the RSVP Program is Rosemary DeLuke. Rosemary has a 20-year history as an executive secretary in the private sector.

Current staffing will be sustained through grants from Corporation for National and Community Service, the State Office for the Aging, as well as donations, sponsorships, and funding through the United Way of the Valley and Greater Utica Area.

Additional support staff for the RSVP Program includes the agency's receptionists, the fiscal director, bookkeeper, and the agency's executive director. Agency fundraisers help to offset these administrative costs. In addition, PathStone has assigned an enrollee to the RSVP program to provide clerical assistance for the program.

In the proposed RSVP budget for 2015-2018, the RSVP Program Director, who is currently working .70 FTE, will be full time. The Program Director will assume the responsibilities of the program assistant, as that limited part-time position will be eliminated. This decision was made to make better use of existing resources, and to further strengthen the RSVP program.

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Catholic Charities has a strong organizational infrastructure. The RSVP Program has three designated offices, as well as the use of an intake room for handicapped volunteers and/or clients, a conference room for trainings, and the joint use of all common space at the facility. Five PC's and printers are available for staff and volunteers, as well as copiers, postage meters, faxes, phones, file cabinets, and all necessary supplies. Technical assistance is provided by the sponsor, as well as necessary maintenance of the offices and equipment. Catholic Charities of the Albany Diocese sets policies and procedures and maintains a system of quality controls. CQI (Continuing Quality Improvements) staff periodically select programs for auditing. All staff completes biweekly timesheets, as well as time studies when managing more than one program. All travel vouchers are submitted monthly to the fiscal department. Purchase requisitions are completed and forwarded, with receipts, to the accounting department for payment. When funding cuts are announced by grantors, immediate action is taken by the executive and fiscal directors to avoid agency deficits.

The agency insures the regular monitoring of all staff. The program directors are responsible for supervising their immediate staff, while they report directly to the executive director. Every month, the executive director meets with all project directors to do a thorough review of programs and agency activities. That same week, a meeting is held with all agency staff. Program directors meet quarterly with both the executive director and then the fiscal director. Annually, all program directors meet with the Board of Directors.

The Advisory Council for the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program is the Ecumenical Food and Shelter Council. This group accepted this responsibility when approached by the RSVP Program Director in 2009. It is an ideal resource for the Healthy Futures focus of the program as representatives from area food pantries, aging services, disabilities services, assistance programs, nutrition programs, and faith communities are present. The bimonthly reports from each of the agencies and programs help to frame the unmet needs, current resources, and possible collaborations which, in many cases, involve the RSVP Program. The RSVP Program annually reports back to the Council the outcomes of our Healthy Future activities. Suggestions are offered by the Council when brainstorming sessions are held to solve an identified problem.

Finally, Catholic Charities is well aware of its obligations to meet the federal match, and has

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successfully done so since 1985. The match is made through a SOFA grant, community grants, fundraisers, and donations to the program.

Other

n/a

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

n/a