

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

An estimated 118 RSVP volunteers will serve. Some of their activities will include assisting with disaster recovery, transportation, tutoring in public schools, food pantry and mobile meal program support, and supporting veterans and military families. The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures. At the end of the three-year grant, 118 RSVP volunteers will contribute 42,000 service hours. Based on the 2011 Independent Sector's volunteer service wage value for the state of Oklahoma, at \$18.28 per hour, RSVP volunteers will generate \$767,760 dollars while meeting the most critical needs in the service area. The annual CNCS federal investment of \$41,132 will be supplemented by \$41,000 annually.

## Strengthening Communities

Cleveland and McClain Counties in Oklahoma comprises both urban and rural communities, with a land area of 1,128 square miles. According to the United States Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau 2011 report, Cleveland and McClain Counties has a population of 301,251, of which 12% are over the age of 65. 69% of the community is comprised of Caucasians, 7% are Black, 9% are Hispanic and 7% are American Indian.

According to the 2011 Oklahoma Policy Institute and the United Health Foundation report, Oklahoma ranks 48th in the overall health of our population. According to the report, Oklahoma has among the highest prevalence of obesity and diabetes, plus the highest rate of death from cancer and heart disease. The report states that 23% of children under age 18 and 9.5% of persons age 65 and older who reside in the service area live in poverty.

The Oklahoma City International Transportation Network (ITN) 2012 report states 21% or 7,592 persons age 65 and older who reside in Cleveland and McClain Counties have a transportation disability and no longer drive.

The CNCS primary focus area selected is Healthy Futures. 28% of the volunteers will support Healthy Future activities and 72% of the volunteers will serve in other focus areas. Examples of primary focus (Healthy Futures) volunteer activities include: operating food pantries; which provide nutritious meals to low-income families, preparing and delivering hot nutritious meals to low-income elderly and handicapped persons, registering patients for cancer and cardiac treatments, and providing arm-through-arm transportation to frail low-income elderly persons in need of rides to their medical appointments.

Planning and implementation of volunteer service activities will incorporate support from the Board

## **Narratives**

of Directors of RSVP of Central Oklahoma (sponsoring agency), RSVP Community Advisory Group, staff of the new project and RSVP of Central Oklahoma, United Way of Central Oklahoma, the local Area Agency on Aging, Oklahoma Department of Human Services, and community leaders. A strong collaboration with these organizations will enable RSVP management and volunteers to concentrate on meeting critical community volunteer needs as they evolve.

Each quarter the Board of Directors of RSVP of Central Oklahoma (sponsoring agency), RSVP Community Advisory Group and staff will review and discuss progress reached and possible ways to increase volunteer support in changing critical community needs that address education, economic opportunity, healthy futures, environmental stewardship, and serving veterans, and active military personnel & their families.

The project staff will maintain a strong relationship with the volunteer members and stations, through verbal and electronic communication, to assure information regarding National Performance Measure outcomes and outputs are effectively measured, collected and managed in the RSVP Reporter software database. All information will be accurately entered into the RSVP Reporter software database.

Annually the project will implement performance measurement surveys with volunteers and stations served. Survey results will be reviewed by the RSVP staff, RSVP of Central Oklahoma Board of Directors, RSVP Community Advisory Group and community partners; and program adjustments are explored and implemented when needed.

The project will work strongly with state Senior Corps, including RSVP, Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent programs by providing support in program administration, volunteer recruitment, volunteer training, and public awareness.

The project will work with AmeriCorps, Oklahoma State Service Commission, Oklahoma Department of Human Services, nonprofit organizations, and faith-based organizations to support service activities. One such example is the collaborations RSVP of Central Oklahoma (sponsoring agency) has developed to help bring a "new normalcy" to the victims of the devastating May 2013 tornado and storms in our area. Partners include AmeriCorps members, American Red Cross, The Corporation for National & Community Service, City of Moore, Oklahoma Emergency Management, FEMA, the United Methodist Church Disaster Response team and members of the local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) team.

During the three-year grant cycle, the RSVP of Central Oklahoma Board of Directors and RSVP Community Advisory Group members will successfully mobilize community resources in excess of

## **Narratives**

\$125,000 including in-kind contributions, fundraising, foundation grants, grant awards from United Way and the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, and individual contributions.

Media will serve as a great tool for RSVP to reach diverse populations, as it enables us to target specific segments of our service area to recruit new members and stations. 31% of the service area is made up of non-Caucasian citizens; therefore we will make a concentrated effort to secure media support that is targeted to the Black, Hispanic and Asian populations who reside in Cleveland and McClain Counties, Oklahoma.

### **Recruitment and Development**

The project will successfully recruit a diverse volunteer and station pool by reaching out to the residents and community leaders throughout Cleveland and McClain Counties in Oklahoma. These efforts will be accomplished through the efforts of the RSVP staff, Board of Directors of RSVP of Central Oklahoma (sponsoring agency), RSVP Community Advisory Group and volunteers by annually participating in 10+ public speaking engagements at health fairs, United Way corporate rallies, civic and church groups, Chambers of Commerce, and local corporation/business pre-retiree/post-retiree meetings. The volunteers are especially successful in recruiting new members because they share how RSVP enables them to utilize their skills and abilities to meet critical community needs; plus how RSVP involvement enhances their feelings of self-worth, improves their physical/mental health, and increases opportunities to make new friends.

In addition, annually 12+ articles will be published in local newspapers, Area Aging Agency publications, electronic media, and the RSVP website and Facebook page; regarding volunteer recruitment/placement and volunteer success stories.

The project will collaborate with the United Way Volunteer Center to assure potential volunteers who are age 55 and older are referred to RSVP for placement and training.

Each new RSVP volunteer will be interviewed, screened and trained on procedures by RSVP staff upon joining, and prior to placement in the community. When staff is performing community placements, efforts will be made to match new RSVP members with experienced RSVP volunteers for training and "shadowing". The RSVP staff will conduct quarterly orientation meetings for new and existing volunteer members.

RSVP volunteers will also receive on-site orientation and in-service training from the station they are serving, as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding signed between RSVP and the station.

Recognition of volunteer service will be performed through email, direct mail, nomination for local/state/national volunteer awards and hosting formal/informal celebration events.

## **Narratives**

RSVP volunteers will receive skill building and leadership development training through a variety of community partnerships, including the Oklahoma Policy Institute, providing detailed facts regarding the most up-to-date research related to the present health status of local citizens; FEMA, AmeriCorps and the American Red Cross, providing disaster safety training; and the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office, providing the Elder Driver Safety Program and "senior fraud fighter" training.

The project staff and volunteers provide support to station representatives through on-site station visits, plus provide consultation and printed materials concerning the most effective methods to train, supervise, retain and recognize volunteers age 55 and older.

The RSVP staff will receive training throughout the year regarding their work responsibilities and aging-related issues, through the Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits, United Way, Oklahoma State Conference on Aging, National Service Knowledge Work website, state/regional/national trainings and CNCS virtual conferences.

Volunteers will complete a survey every two years to provide valuable feedback regarding their volunteer assignments, satisfaction with RSVP and the stations, and ways RSVP can improve the program.

The 2012 survey results of our existing project, RSVP of Central Oklahoma, Corporation for National and Community Service, Agreement No. 14SRWOK002 include: 96% of the volunteers stated RSVP offers new ways to make a difference in the community, 99% stated volunteerism through RSVP has enhanced their purpose in life, 96% reported RSVP volunteer activities increase their sense of value, and 99% reported their involvement in RSVP has increased their knowledge and participation in addressing critical needs in the community.

The project will provide volunteer support to 12+ local nonprofit, governmental, educational, and faith-based organizations during the grant cycle; encompassing 20+ diverse volunteer service activities.

### **Program Management**

This project will be operated under the sponsorship of an existing RSVP project named RSVP of Central Oklahoma, Inc. The sponsor is an incorporated 501(c) nonprofit organization (since 1979), and is governed by an independent twelve-member Board of Directors. Beth Patterson, executive director of RSVP of Central Oklahoma since 1986, will provide direct oversight of the new project. To determine the role and success of the projects' ability to meet CNCS focus area needs in the service area, tools such as the annual community needs assessment performed by United Way of Central Oklahoma; plus, the research-based results produced by the Oklahoma Policy Institute and

## Narratives

Oklahoma Department of Human Services will be analyzed.

Regularly the RSVP staff will review volunteer and station records to assure they are in compliance with RSVP program regulations and RSVP volunteers are performing their assigned service activities. All verbal and written communication with the station representatives and volunteers will be thoroughly documented in the RSVP Reporter software program; which enables all parties to stay abreast of accomplishments and anticipated challenges.

The outcome/performance measurement tools created and implemented by the project will attest that the RSVP volunteers are addressing critical needs in the community. The data will be collected primarily via annual written, electronic and telephonic surveys. The results will be compiled and studied by the Board of Directors of RSVP of Central Oklahoma (sponsoring agency), RSVP Community Advisory Group, staff, United Way of Central Oklahoma, and the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. Each entity will provide valuable insight and recommendations (when necessary) regarding needed programmatic changes.

The RSVP staff will verify the volunteer is age 55 or older by reviewing the individual's driver license. Volunteers are required to complete/sign a Volunteer Registration form which includes their driver license number, educational background, handicapped status, previous occupation/employer, civic/community involvement, detailed survey of the volunteer's areas of interest to serve, permission for RSVP to use their photograph for promotional purposes and permission for RSVP to perform confidential background checks.

A criminal background check will be performed on all RSVP volunteers who serve vulnerable populations. Volunteers who have committed a criminal activity will not be provided volunteer opportunities that work directly with vulnerable populations. An Oklahoma State Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) check will be performed on all volunteer drivers, and RSVP staff will perform a Senior Volunteer Motor Vehicle Record Evaluation after receiving the state issued MVR. If a prospective volunteer driver has more than 6 points on the Evaluation, serious examination is conducted before a volunteer driver placement is made.

Utilizing a software program named the RSVP Volunteer Reporter; the project will maintain a complete and thorough database of our senior volunteers, volunteer service hours, volunteer jobs, service hours performed in each focus area, stations served, and contributions made to the project. The software is designed specifically for RSVP projects and it generates approximately 98% of the data needed for CNCS reports.

The project does not anticipate the need to graduate stations that do not fall within CNCS focus areas

## **Narratives**

for this project, as we will start with a fresh slate to recruit stations in Cleveland and McClain Counties.

This project will be operated under the sponsorship of an existing RSVP project named RSVP of Central Oklahoma, Inc. The sponsor is an incorporated 501(c) nonprofit organization (since 1979), governed by an independent twelve-member Board of Directors, which works side-by-side with the Community Advisory Group and the project director, to ensure sound programmatic and fiscal oversight is performed.

Clearly defined internal policies and practices are in place, as described: The Board and project director conduct monthly financial accounting assessments, including in-depth review of the general ledger, bank reconciliation, and disbursements. The Board and project director also perform quarterly testing of policies and procedures and an annual review of indirect costs and the fixed asset inventory. Monthly bookkeeping tasks are conducted by an independent certified public accountant and an annual financial audit is performed by a separate independent certified accountant.

### **Organizational Capability**

Internal policies and practices are practiced by the sponsor, RSVP of Central Oklahoma; encompassing a monthly financial accounting review; including accounts receivable, accounts payable and in-kind contributions, quarterly testing of policies and procedures, annual review of indirect costs and the fixed assets inventory.

RSVP of Central Oklahoma has a solid infrastructure in place to provide sound fiscal oversight over the new project regarding project income; including federal, state and county funds, in-kind donations, contributions, foundation grants, and corporate gifts, such as the \$50,000 award recently received from the Shell Oil Corporation. The financial award received from Shell was secured for a specific purpose, for the project to increase volunteer support, and to increase the capacity of nonprofit organizations who are serving victims of the devastating May 2013 tornados in Cleveland County and the south Oklahoma City area. Therefore the project will perform an additional layer of fiscal oversight to assure the funds are expended as directed/intended by the Shell Oil Corporation.

RSVP of Central Oklahoma has a working strategic plan that is reviewed by the RSVP of Central Oklahoma Board of Directors (sponsoring agency), RSVP Community Advisory Group and staff semi-annually and revised as needed to reflect current community needs. The strategic plan will be modified to include goals related to Cleveland and McClain counties when the Notice of Grant Award is received by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The staff will perform monthly programmatic reviews of the new projects' activities, such as

## Narratives

confirming Memorandums of Understanding are valid with date/signature, volunteers are performing assigned service activities, written volunteer assignment descriptions exist, and station jobs are coded to the correct CNCS Focus Areas.

The new projects' bookkeeping tasks will be completed off-site by an independent certified public accountant monthly and will be thoroughly reviewed by the Board Audit & Finance Committee. An annual financial audit will be performed by a separate independent certified accountant.

A programmatic and financial audit will be performed by United Way of Central Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Department of Human Services annually.

RSVP of Central Oklahoma's Bylaws, Personnel Policy Handbook, Volunteer Handbook, and travel policies will be adhered to by the new project, and are reviewed annually to assure compliance with CNCS standards.

The roles and responsibilities of the project staff are clearly defined in up-to-date written job descriptions and position manuals. Several RSVP of Central Oklahoma staff member are cross-trained to perform back-up duties during unexpected staff absences, allowing program services to continue without interruption; a strategy that will be implemented in the new project as well. This staff will provide direct oversight, training and support to the new project staff.

The seasoned staff of RSVP of Central Oklahoma (sponsoring agency) has a strong track record in operating the project and managing volunteers. The project director, Beth Patterson has overseen federal, state, county and foundation grants for 27 years; and the coordinators have over 23 years combined experience in managing volunteers. The Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits, Oklahoma State Council on Aging, Central Oklahoma Volunteer Administrators, and the Oklahoma Senior Corps Directors Association frequently rely on the staff to provide accurate/helpful information regarding program management, senior volunteerism, senior transportation and senior services/resources. Well-designed systems are in place to continuously improve the RSVP of Central Oklahoma project, and will be implemented in the new project also. Program outcome measurement and performance tools and the project strategic plan are thoroughly reviewed regularly.

Program outcome measurement/performance surveys will be conducted bi-annually with the new projects' volunteers and stations. Compiled results will be reviewed by the staff, RSVP of Central Oklahoma Board of Directors (sponsoring agency) and the RSVP Community Advisory Group; and recommended improvements will be implemented as needed.

Established staff positions for the new project will include:

1.) Executive Director, Beth Patterson, has served as the project director since 1986. Prior to becoming

## Narratives

the project director, Patterson was the projects' volunteer coordinator and associate director for four years. She is responsible for managing federal, state and local grants, preparing program and financial reports, and supervising project staff. Patterson will provide direct oversight of the new project sight. Patterson has a Bachelor of Science degree in Open Studies with concentration in Gerontology, Social Services and Human Relations. She also has an Associate degree in Applied Sciences, with a double major in Services for the Aged and Family Services.

2.)Executive Administrator, Natalie DuBuc was employed in 2006. She will devote 10% of her work day to support the new project. DuBuc is responsible for the general routine function of the project, processing new volunteers, accounts payable and receivable activities, and maintaining accurate records for all contributions/grants.

3.)Volunteer Coordinator, Patty Corona has nine years of experience with the project, and will devote 10% of her work day to train the new project coordinator. Corona is responsible for the placement and retention of volunteers; verifying the stations are in compliance with RSVP program regulations, plus links volunteers in short-term and long-term community volunteer assignments.

4.)Coordinator Assistant, Nicole Richmond was hired in early September 2013. Richmond will devote 10% of her work day collecting and performing data entry of volunteer service hours performed in the new project. She collects and performs data entry of volunteer hours, manages the projects' Facebook page, and assists Corona in scheduling volunteers in both short-term and long-term activities that address CNCS focus areas.

### Other

N/A

### PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A