

Narratives

Executive Summary

The WA-ID Volunteer Center submits this application to CNCS for funding its bi-state RSVP Project for three years beginning 4/1/2015.

A minimum of 274 RSVP volunteers will serve in national priority focus areas, as well as in areas identified as local community priorities. The primary focus area of this project is, Healthy Futures, with RSVP members delivering meals to the home-bound, assisting at local food banks, mentoring food bank recipients in healthy cooking techniques, working in the community garden and providing Medicare insurance counseling.

Over the next three years, 58% of unduplicated project members will serve in work plans supporting the "Healthy Futures" focus area. Our secondary focus on "Education" gives RSVP members the opportunity to be reading mentors at area grade schools. Other project members provide income tax assistance, serve our veteran population and serve in projects dedicated to keeping seniors active and engaged in community while supporting the local economy.

At the end of the three-year grant, this project will produce the following outcomes: Over 3,000 "food-insecure" individuals access sufficient food for an active, healthy life. At least 120 home-bound, older adults, or individuals with disabilities, receive nutritious food at their homes on a daily basis; Reading proficiency increases to grade-level benchmarks in at least 85% of grade school students receiving RSVP services; Seniors and other individuals living in poverty save at least \$100,000 in income tax preparation and filing fees; At least 100 elders make relevant and financially sound Medicare decisions; and over 40 veterans receive RSVP services enriching their lives through increased social interaction and physical activity

The CNCS federal investment of \$74,785 will be supplemented by \$36,693 in local matching funds.

Strengthening Communities

The WA-ID Volunteer Center, Inc., (Volunteer Center) sponsors the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) serving two counties in Washington State and four counties in the State of Idaho. The Volunteer Center has been a stand-alone 501©3 entity since July 2002. The RSVP Project, however, was started in this region in 1976. RSVP remains a vital, senior-based "volunteer driver" in

Narratives

North-Central Idaho and Southeastern Washington after 38 years of continuous operation.

The six counties served by this project encompass an area of about 6,207 square miles and 113,000 people. Most of these counties are very rural with population density ranging from 3.2 persons per square mile to 46.3 persons per square mile.

"While the nation and region have seen an upturn in standard of living, Idaho has not improved in 13 years. The "real per capita gross domestic product" for Idahoans was about \$35,000 at the turn of the 21st century. By 2013, Idaho still had a real per capita GDP of \$35,000 with neighboring states at \$51,000 and the nationwide figure at \$50,000." (c. Scott Benson, Professor of Economics at Idaho State University, as reported in the Idaho Falls Post-Register and Lewiston Tribune on August 11, 2014.)

People over the age of 65 in our main service area (Asotin, Garfield, Nez Perce and Clearwater counties) make up between 18 and 22 of the population. Between 13.7 and 16.5 of the population in these counties live below the poverty level (US Census Bureau, 2008-2012, American Community Survey.)

The high poverty rate and low real per capita GDP creates significant demand for this project to focus on "Healthy Futures" as our primary objective so as to provide services responding to food insecurity borne of these economic realities.

RSVP members address the "Healthy Futures" focus area through the following service activities: Emergency food delivery through six community food pantries; nutritious meal delivery to the homebound population via seven work stations; teaching food bank recipients to cook healthy and affordable meals, working in the community garden and providing Medicare counseling.

Because of strong ties this project has built over the last 38 years with local food pantries, food-delivery organizations, and our State Department of Insurance, we are able to gather statistics from these work stations readily through internal survey instruments. Last year, over 3,000 people accessed nutritious food through food pantries and 120 individuals received food at home on a daily basis. The Senior Health Insurance Benefits Advising (SHIBA) program, supported by our Agency for the last

Narratives

nine years, is another important component in our response to the "Healthy Futures" focus area. Last year RSVP SHIBA counselors helped over 100 seniors and disabled citizens find relevant and financially sound solutions to their health care insurance needs. We are proud to support 274 RSVP members, with 58% in our primary focus area (Healthy Futures.)

Our Project utilizes Volunteer Reporter software for volunteer and work station data collection. Volunteers are given a priority placement to properly facilitate the collection of unduplicated numbers in work plans and to maximize impact in "Healthy Futures," our main focus area. Staff has received formal as well as on-the-job training in fully utilizing this robust tool. We could not do business without it.

Lewiston, Idaho (RSVP Project location) is the home of the Idaho State Veterans Home, currently housing 66 veterans of foreign wars. Our project is proud to serve this population through the support of RSVP members serving on regular schedules and at special events throughout the year. Located close to the Osborn Community Garden, veterans also receive contributions of fresh fruits and vegetables from RSVP members working at that work station (part of our primary focus area, "Healthy Futures.") Other RSVP members serve this work station through Pets for Vets program, the annual "Walk and Roll", serve as activity assistants and as canteen personnel.

Our Project office is located in Lewiston, Idaho in Nez Perce County, the most populated county in our service area. RSVP, located at the Lewiston Community and Senior Center, is well positioned to connect with our senior population. Through our partnership with the City of Lewiston, we are able to present senior-related activities and events at the Community/Senior Center at no cost to our program and readily connect area seniors to volunteer opportunities.

The Volunteer Center supports activities, workstations and events focused on encouraging seniors to become and/or stay active and retain their independence for as long as possible. Our current repertoire of annual events includes the Lewis Clark Senior Games (a popular workstation) and the Senior Health and Fitness Fair. And, of course, the act of volunteering is a well-documented avenue to staying healthy. Our Volunteer Center is a one-stop shop for active men and women over the age of 55.

Narratives

Local input into our program's design and evaluation is gained through our Board of Directors/Advisory Board. This body, comprised of professionals from diverse disciplines and geographies, has representation from two counties, the City of Lewiston, local businesses, Lewis-Clark State College plus both the legal and accounting professions. Ad hoc committees are convened to influence and support one-time events and fundraisers.

It is mainly through our community partners that public awareness and support for the RSVP program is garnered. In our particular geography and social climate, word-of-mouth is the best advertising. Volunteers are recruited in locker rooms, at Rotary meetings, at swimming pools and local fun-runs. People in North Central Idaho are accomplished gossips, and word travels fast in our small communities! Of course, we utilize traditional methods in the public relations arena, such as print ads in our "one" regional newspaper, and public service announcements on the local radio stations. We publish a monthly list of volunteer opportunities in the "Golden Times" insert of the Lewiston Morning Tribune which has a regional readership. As particular programs become current, news releases and public service announcements are placed with local media. Staff and volunteers attend a wide variety of meetings in the community (Kiwanis, Rotary, retirees' groups, church, United Ways, and city council meetings, etc.) also building public awareness and support for our programs. But our special events and community partners are still the most efficient and economic public relations tool in our arsenal.

Recruitment and Development

Over the years, this Project has successfully developed work stations and service opportunities that create high quality volunteer assignments with plenty of opportunities for seniors to share their vast experience, ability and skills while making significant contributions in responding to national service priorities and local community needs. Opportunities that capitalize on RSVP members' life experience and skill are as follows:

STATE HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS ADVISING (SHIBA) Program enables volunteers to gain new skills in direct counseling involving seniors making decisions about Medicare and other insurance-related issues. SHIBA volunteers attend extensive training (at least once every month) from the State Department of Insurance enabling them to do this extremely complex and important job with a sense of confidence and sufficient resources.

TAX ADVISING PROGRAM - RSVP members with experience or skills in accounting, management

Narratives

or tax receive additional specialized training from experts in order to complete tax returns for seniors and other low-income individuals. They learn about our intricate income tax system plus they learn an internet- based tax return reporting software that enables returns to be directly submitted to the appropriate IRS office. This training also allows them to keep up to date with yearly changes in the tax codes.

LEWIS CLARK SENIOR GAMES - RSVP members with management and people skills can assume leadership or support roles in this once-a-year athletic competition for men and women who are 50 "or better." RSVP members can volunteer to manage one of the over 13 separate events offered. Each event is run as a separate "business" and volunteer opportunity. Events must have a budget, be marketed, organized, staffed, supported and celebrated. Our RSVP members lead and manage these events in a professional manner and have fun at the same time.

AMERICAREADS -- RSVP members (some of whom are retired teachers) often use their ability and skill in reading and interacting with students as reading tutors.

COOKING MATTERS -- RSVP members with skills and abilities in cooking and nutrition are able to mentor low-income folks in preparing healthy meals on a limited budget from foods they may not be familiar with.

The Memorandum of Understanding document, signed by workstations in our Primary Focus Area and other focus areas as well, clearly states that the workstation must provide any specialized training needed for a particular placement. Our Project does not place volunteers without having a job description for each position and a training plan in place. Volunteer workstations and their supervisors as well as community groups utilizing volunteers are invited to attend any volunteer management workshops sponsored by the Volunteer Center. Volunteer management professionals come to Lewiston to present high-quality workshops. Past trainers have included Steve McCurley and Nancy Macduff.

This region has a small minority population (an average of 92.5 %white, 3.3% Hispanic, 2.4% Native American and 1.8% other minorities in our counties.) RSVP volunteers include members of the Nez Perce Tribe and other minority populations. In the past, we delivered over 200 volunteer-made winter hats and mittens to the Nez Perce Reservation's Boys and Girls Club. In this manner, we encourage communication and continue to build partnerships within our region and broaden the reach of recruitment efforts. Currently, 13% of RSVP members supported at this project are veterans

Narratives

and 2% of the members are disabled.

This RSVP Project has developed a sound plan and infrastructure to retain and recognize RSVP volunteers including the following elements:

- Requiring workstations (within the MOU) to have job descriptions for each volunteer prior to placement;
- Immediately placing newly recruited volunteers to insure their engagement in a timely manner;
- Regular/personal staff follow-up after each assignment in order to assure that volunteers are satisfied with the placement, valued by the workstation personnel and want to continue that volunteer placement;
- Recognizing volunteers at large annual events as well as personal cards/phone calls on birthdays or other special occasions, or conversely, to respond to an illness or death in the family;
- The Volunteer Center, sponsor of RSVP, provides training and technical assistance to workstation staff and volunteers on an as-needed basis. Volunteer coordinators receive specialized training during their first year of employment (and ongoing) through State of Idaho and State of Washington associations and agencies (Washington Association of RSVP Directors, Idaho SHIBA program, SERVE Idaho Conference);
- This Project also provides intervention services in the case a dispute arises between volunteer and workstation. A quick response in an unhappy situation, gives us the opportunity to retain the volunteer by providing another placement opportunity.

Program Management

The Volunteer Center continues to develop and manage volunteer stations and volunteer assignments that address national priorities and specific community needs, and provide meaningful placements for the volunteers. Through our partnership with the United Way Agency, the regional hospital and the local college, we are able to utilize the information from a community needs survey conducted by those entities. Volunteer stations and assignments can, then, directly mesh with the community needs identified from this valuable survey tool. The most recent survey identified several impact areas that support national focus areas (Health, Education and Economic/Financial Stability.) Current workstations include organizations responding to the above-stated needs. They include food pantries, senior nutrition and other meal delivery programs, grade schools, Tax Aid and SHIBA Program.

Narratives

Staff conducts annual onsite visits with each work station, reviewing the tenants of the MOU with workstation supervisors so as to be in compliance with RSVP program regulations. The MOU clearly states the national focus area to be addressed by the workstation. MOU also delineates the prohibited activities this RSVP program is not allowed to support. Project staff is aware of prohibited activities (45CFR & 2520.65) and will report suspected violations to the Executive Director of the WA-ID Volunteer Center. Onsite visits also ensure that RSVP members are performing their assigned service activities as described in their job description.

The project has no current RSVP workstations outside the parameters of the work plans stated in this application. Graduation of workstations occurred during the last two years as we fine-tuned MOU's to reflect relevant CNCS guidelines for national priorities and focus areas.

This RSVP project has built strong ties, over the last 38 years, with six local food pantries and seven organizations (including the Senior Nutrition Program) that deliver life-sustaining food to home-bound neighbors. They readily support our CNCS reporting requirements by providing internal survey documents and/or allowing us to disseminate our own surveys. Last year, over 3,000 people received nutritious food. The Senior Health Insurance Benefits Advising (SHIBA) program, supported by our Agency for the last nine years, is another important component in our response to the "Healthy Futures" focus area. Last year RSVP SHIBA counselors helped over 100 seniors and disabled citizens find relevant and financially sound solutions to their health care insurance needs. The Idaho SHIBA program supports our survey efforts and also provides statistics from their internal data base. We are proud to support 274 RSVP members, 58% in the "Healthy Futures" focus area and pleased to provide measurable outcome results in this important focus area.

This RSVP project depends on the volunteer services of the RSVP Community Advisory Committee and the WA-ID Volunteer Center Board of Directors. Representatives from two county commissioner boards, the City of Lewiston, Lewis Clark State College, private industry, the faith-based community, the legal profession and the accounting profession gives our organization the reach and depth necessary to continue strengthening and growing our Project.

Information and data are managed through the utilization of "Volunteer Reporter" software specific

Narratives

to reporting requirements of CNCS and RSVP. Volunteer Reporter is a nimble asset that successfully demonstrates the measurable impacts of our volunteer services collecting appropriate end-outcome information. When survey instruments are utilized for end outcome information, staff has all been trained to collect and analyze that data using Excel spreadsheets.

The Volunteer Center secures resources, both cash and in-kind, to sustain and expand our project through ongoing fundraising efforts to raise working capital through annual events which include the Senior Health and Fitness Fair, and the Lewis Clark Senior Games; In-kind support comes from our landlord, the City of Lewiston, and subsidizes our rent plus provides free meeting or event space at the Lewiston Community/Senior Center. The Volunteer Center submits grant requests to many local municipalities and foundations and receives State of Washington support through the Department of Commerce and the Washington Association of RSVP Directors.

Organizational Capability

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, now sponsored by the WA-ID Volunteer Center, has had a presence in Region II of Idaho for almost four decades.

The Board of Directors meets bi-monthly and reviews financial statements thoroughly at each meeting. A financial audit is conducted by a CPA firm every other year with an accountant's review conducted on alternate years. The accountant in charge gives a full report to the Board of Directors once a year.

The Board Treasurer is a Certified Public Accountant who assists in the budgeting process and carefully reviews our cash position and adherence to generally accepted accounting principles and federal cash match requirements. Our membership with the Washington Association of RSVP Directors, the State of Idaho Senior Corps organization and in the National Association of Senior Corps Directors gives us many avenues to researching applicable OMB circulars and RSVP program requirements and best practices.

We are well connected.

Key staff positions include:

Barbara Bush (B.S. Management Technology) holds the full-time position of Volunteer Center Director as well as RSVP Director and has served RSVP here since December 2003. Mrs. Bush previously directed Small Business Development programs for colleges in Idaho and Oregon giving

Narratives

her sound tools to successfully manage this stand-alone, non-profit organization. The Small Business Development Centers are also federal grant recipients and Barbara has extensive experience and skill in managing grants and writing applications. She is a past officer of the Washington Association of RSVP Directors and also served as a regional representative on the National RSVP Association. Mrs. Bush has been a member of this community for the past 35 years and is well-known as a community participant. Currently, she is an officer of the Lewiston Library Foundation Board. Mrs. Bush has over 15 years experience in managing federal grants.

Cathy Robinson, Volunteer Coordinator, manages all operational aspects of the RSVP Project. Mrs. Robinson first came to our organization as a volunteer in the AmericaReads program. She then served as a VISTA member for three years, becoming a permanent employee in September, 2012. Since Mrs. Robinson began her VISTA service with us, she improved and professionalized the AmericaReads Program in both of the States that RSVP serves at this Project. Cathy developed sound and lasting relationships with school district staff and individual teachers making personal visits, phone calls, and emails on a regular basis. Cathy is responsible for the success of this popular, outcome-based volunteer opportunity. She developed the survey document used each year and has institutionalized its use at our area schools. Cathy's excellent rapport with school district administration and teachers and attention to detail has made these important partners anxious to provide the data we need to ascertain the impact these volunteers have. Mrs. Robinson has managed the Lewis Clark Senior Games workstation for the Volunteer Center since 2009 and grown this event/volunteer opportunity by over 100% in participation. Cathy is responsible for all reporting requirements for CNCS, the Washington State Association of RSVP Directors and other grantors. She has a sound knowledge of budgeting and assists with the CNCS grant application process. Cathy is currently in her last semester of attaining a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration at Lewis Clark State College and has 25 years experience in that field. Mrs. Robinson's experience as a volunteer, a VISTA member and a Volunteer Coordinator make her an extremely valuable asset to this organization and a sound candidate for a future RSVP directorship. Cathy has attended on-line and in-person CNCS training in grant management and has been an integral part in this grant application process.

Linda Vacura, (B.S. Business Management Technology) has owned her own accounting business for over 10 years. Past experience in bookkeeping and accounting for a wide variety of companies and organizations give her the knowledge and experience to do an excellent job of managing and directing

Narratives

our financial assets. Linda utilizes the Quickbooks software system to organize our financial data. Mrs. Vacura is responsible for the day-to-day financial operation of all grant monies including the federal grant funds. Linda's attention to detail is legendary; her source documents impeccable. Thanks to her thorough approach, our annual financial audits and reviews are without exception. Though Mrs. Vacura is a part-time employee, she does a full-time job! Mrs. Vacura has worked with this Project since 2004 and is an invaluable part of this team. Linda has 10 years in assisting in the management of federal grants.

This RSVP project has a long (over 38 years) history of managing federal grant dollars and securing local matching funds.

Our staff is considered a volunteer management resource. We are able to provide local training for other agencies utilizing volunteers and present volunteer recruitment workshops to our local Americorps project's pre-service orientation when called upon to do so. Not only do we support a large contingent of senior volunteers, but we also sponsor the annual Senior Health and Fitness Fair and manage and present the Lewis Clark Senior Games. Our elementary literacy (America Reads), the Idaho SHIBA Program, the Tax Aide Program and our Meal Delivery and Food Bank programs are examples of programs that have demonstrated measurable impact in our community for the past eight years. We have developed survey mechanisms to capture those impact statistics in the Healthy Future focus area (meal delivery and food bank programs) and are confident in our ability to move forward under the Serve America Act.

The Volunteer Center, a stand-alone 501© 3 organization sponsoring the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program has a formal Policy and Procedure Manual clearly defining staff members and board members roles, detailing personnel management, purchasing procedures and travel policies. Linda Vacura, our Financial Manager, maintains equipment inventory and depreciation information. Risk management is an important part of these policies; bank statements are sent directly to our Board Chairman and two signatures are required on all checks.

Bi-monthly Board of Directors/Advisory Board Meetings address self-assessment and evaluation of current programming and our long-standing Board is open and supportive to suggestions for

Narratives

improvement from staff and community partners.

During 2011, the Board of Directors and staff of the Volunteer Center, through a Washington state-wide grant, began a comprehensive planning process with Development Strategies Plus, a consulting firm in Walla Walla, Washington. The main goal of this planning process was to strengthen the infrastructure of the WA-ID Volunteer Center. Both a financial fitness assessment and an organizational assessment were conducted. These were followed by one-on-one interviews with board members and the Executive Director. Data from all processes was summarized by Development Strategies Plus (DSP) and formed the basis for a Board and Staff retreat held August 31, 2011 and facilitated by DSP. A 2011- 2014 Strategic Plan was the outcome of that retreat and is re-visited annually.

Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A