

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

An estimated 300 RSVP volunteers will serve. Some of their activities will include preparing and delivering meals to frail homebound seniors in our four county area; providing respite care for caregivers, teaching health classes on Living with Chronic Illness and Diabetes; providing help and information about health insurance and calling homebound seniors to check on them daily. Our Primary Focus for this grant will be Healthy Futures concentrating on Aging in Place and Access to Care. At the end of the three-year grant, we anticipate RSVP volunteers will have served over 800 unduplicated homebound seniors providing nutritious meals to help them remain in their homes longer and help to increase their feelings of social support. RSVP volunteers will have provided respite care for local caregivers, provide seniors with important information on healthy living and insurance as well as help local non-profits meet the community needs in our area. The CNCS federal investment of \$52,800 will be supplemented by \$25,211 in matching funds from the sponsor, local businesses and local service organizations.

## Strengthening Communities

The Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland includes Wicomico, Dorchester, Somerset and Worcester counties. These counties are rural and agrarian in nature. The three largest towns on the Lower Shore include the Dorchester County seat, Cambridge (population 12,503); the county seat of Wicomico, Salisbury (population 31,243) and the Worcester County resort town of Ocean City (resident population 7,089, grows to 3000,000+ in the summertime). Some public transit services are available in these three towns but these services are reduced in the winter months and public transportation is almost none existent in the outlying rural areas. The Seafood, Poultry, and Agriculture Industries are the driving forces to the economies of all four counties and northern Worcester County is impacted by the Tourist Industry.

Dorchester Co consists of 600 sq. miles of land and 70 sq. miles of water with a population of 32,618. Manufacturing accounts for 24% of the workforce, with the balance in services, tourism and agriculture. Somerset Co has 320 sq. miles and a population of 26,470. A major seafood, poultry and agricultural producer, it is also home to the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Worcester Co occupies 468 sq. miles with a population of 57,454, is home to the largest vacation resort in Maryland, tourism accounts for a big part of the economy. Wicomico County occupies 377 sq. miles with a population of 98,733. It is home to Perdue Farms, one of the largest poultry businesses in the east.

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According to the Census Bureau, Maryland ranks 20th in the nation for the number of individuals over age 65. While the majority of Maryland's 65+ population live in the metropolitan areas near Baltimore and Washington DC, the Lower Shore counties have a proportionately higher concentration of seniors. The 2013 population shows 13.4% of Maryland's population is age 65+. However, the 65+ population for the Lower Shore Counties is above the state average (Dorchester 19.3%, Somerset 14.8%, Wicomico 14.1%, Worcester 24.9%). According to the "Grayshore" report from the Business, Economic & Community Outreach Network of Salisbury University, this is due to the fact that the Lower Shore seniors have chosen to age in place; the younger generations are leaving the area for better paying jobs; and the resort area has an in-migration of out of state retirees because of the climate, environmental beauty and the proximity to major metropolitan areas.

Unfortunately the area is ill prepared to meet the needs of this growing elderly population. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration have designated most of the Lower Shore as having shortages of primary medical care, dental, and mental health services. These Medically Underserved areas have two few primary care providers, high infant mortality, high poverty and high numbers of elderly persons. The Maryland Behavioral Risk Behavioral Surveillance System identified the area is having the highest number of chronic disease risk factors in the state with the average Somerset County residents possessing seven risk factors for chronic disease and the highest incidence of diabetes in the state.

Chronic diseases, including heart disease, stroke and diabetes are among the leading causes of death in Maryland and account for 75% of health care costs. Lower Shore seniors with little knowledge of how to manage these diseases do not practice proper health care. According to the Maryland Department on Aging, seniors who participate in the chronic disease self-management evidence-based classes have enormous potential to improve their quality of life and reduce debilitating complications associated with chronic disease through nutrition, exercise, and proper health and self-care habits.

Compounding the problem of chronic disease is the shortage of family and professional caregivers to serve the area's elderly as well as the high incidence of poverty among area seniors. The American Community Survey of 2012, estimates that the Lower Shore has a higher percentage of seniors age 65+ living alone than the Maryland total. Maryland shows 8.8% of persons 65+ living alone while the

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Lower Shore counties range from 9.7% to 13.3%. This survey also shows that the Lower Shore touts a higher percentage of seniors age 65+ living below poverty in three out of four counties. The Maryland percentage of seniors at or below the poverty level is 7.7%; Somerset is 10.2%; Dorchester is 10.9%; Wicomico is 8.7% and Worcester is 6.3%. Living on fixed incomes with rising utilities and food prices forces many seniors to juggle their budgets, sometimes having to do without medicines or nutritious foods. A large percentage of these seniors living in rural areas do not drive, compounding problems with nutrition, socialization and health issues.

In public sessions with the Maryland Department on Aging, Maryland caregivers said more respite services are needed because caregivers are sometimes providing 24 hours of care and need a break. The strain and stress of caregiving greatly impacts the caregiver's health. According to the Provisional Summary Health Statistics for U.S. Adults, National Health Interview Survey in 2008, 31% of caregivers rate their stress levels as 4 to 5 on a 5 point scale. Caregivers must take care of themselves to be able to continue care for their loved ones.

These statistics show a need for services to the senior population of the Lower Shore and to their caregivers; help that will let them remain in their homes longer. We have chosen Healthy Futures with concentration on Aging in Place and Access to Care as our primary focus.

In an effort to address the nutritional and social needs of homebound seniors, our RSVP volunteers will continue to assist with preparation and delivery of nutritious meals to "at risk" homebound seniors. Volunteers will also check on the seniors' well being and ascertain if there any medical issues which require immediate attention or follow-up. They will also provide companionship as they may be the only daily human contact these seniors have. Having a nutritious meal and someone to talk to and check on them provides relief to seniors who live alone and provides much needed socialization. Volunteers will use timesheets with activity logs to keep track of days and hours of service and clients served. The program will measure the success of this performance measure through the use of the required CNCS client survey that will show whether or not the clients report having feelings of increased social ties.

RSVP volunteers will also continue to make daily calls to homebound seniors to check on their well-being through our Telephone Reassurance Program. Calls are made daily; if seniors can not be

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reached their emergency contacts are called. Activities sheets will be used to track hours served and number of calls made daily and action taken if they could not reach the senior. RSVP volunteers will provide health insurance information, and teach and coach classes in living with Chronic Disease Self-Management. Attendance logs with date, time, client names and hours served will be used by each volunteer. All records will be sent to the RSVP office monthly.

RSVP volunteers at the Maryland Home and Community Caregiver Resource Center and Coastal Hospice will provide information to Lower Shore caregivers on available services and respite care. Trained volunteers will also give caregivers respite time allowing the caregiver to do errands and keep doctor appointments. Each RSVP volunteer caregiver volunteer will keep a time sheet that includes the client's name, date of service and hours served.

The involvement of RSVP volunteers in the delivery of meals to homebound elders, teaching of evidence-based chronic disease self-management programs, counseling regarding Medicare benefits and health insurance matters, provision of telephone reassurance, and assistance to family caregivers will help meet critical community needs on the Lower Shore. These activities will help keep Lower Shore seniors in their own homes longer and contribute to their overall physical and mental well-being while improving quality of life as well as increasing socialization.

RSVP volunteers will also become mentors to at risk children, help with disaster preparedness, prepare tax returns for economically disadvantaged individuals, and improve waterways.

MAC Inc., the Area Agency on Aging for Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties has sponsored this RSVP project for over 30 years. MAC has long standing positive working relationships with the agencies that will be the stations providing these services. Thus, MAC will be able to obtain the data needed for program management to ensure our outcomes are met. Data will be collected, analyzed and reported through the use of Volunteer Reporter.

According to the Census and the American Community Survey, the veteran population on the Lower Shore is predominately over 50 with the highest percentage of veterans in all four counties having served in the Vietnam, Korean Wars or WWII. While we have no Veterans Measures at this time dealing with educational, employment or housing assistance, we do have veterans serving as RSVP

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volunteers in or Primary Focus Areas as well as our Community Needs Measures. At the present time we have 10% (which does reflect the veteran population of the area) of our unduplicated volunteers identified as being a veteran. Veterans are also among the recipients of the home delivered meals, the telephone reassurance calls, and the Living with Chronic Disease classes. We will identify these veterans through a question on the survey and activity logs. In addition, MAC spearheads an annual Veterans Summit for the service area and is now working with the Veterans Administration on a project to transition veterans from long term care facilities to independent living in the community. These activities will provide us with additional opportunities to enroll veterans in the RSVP project.

### **Recruitment and Development**

From the initial point of contact, potential RSVP volunteers are asked to identify their skill levels and interests in an effort to make the best match possible. We then work with area non-profits in the four counties to find high quality assignments that fit into our predetermined focus areas. We continue to expand our association with organizations that focus on the needs of the disabled, the elderly, and at risk children. For example one sponsor, Bay Area Center for Independent Living, is a multi-county resource for the disabled. Other sponsors, the Somerset and Worcester County Commissions on Aging and Delmarva Community Services, have been expanding their programs for the elderly and the disabled. Wicomico Mentoring, Junior Achievement and Salisbury's Promise all work to assist "at risk" children. All of these organizations are active community partners with RSVP and offer high quality and meaningful volunteer experiences that serve the needs of this area. Volunteers are encouraged to assume leadership roles at all of our stations. Several RSVP volunteers are currently overseeing the RSVP program for different sites and projects.

In order to offer a high quality experience for the baby boomer volunteers, we continue to increase our contacts with organizations offering more challenging and interesting short- term volunteer assignments. One such event is an annual "Play Day" designed to educate children on obesity and the need to get up and move instead of sitting in front of the TV. "Make a Difference Day" activities center around helping kids stay drug free.

The Project Director and Station Coordinator's will continue to interview and/or survey volunteers periodically, providing an opportunity for volunteers to share experiences and explain what they have learned through their volunteer activities. We use their inspirational stories in the recruitment of others, as well as in nominations for awards that will validate what they are doing to improve their

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community.

Training of volunteers is one of our major priorities. RSVP volunteers receive an initial orientation with RSVP staff. All of our stations provide volunteers with a site specific orientation and continued training. Background checks are done by RSVP or stations where needed. The local Community Foundation offers classes for non-profits and their volunteers on a variety of topics. They also provide scholarships to individuals for non-credit courses at the local community college. We will continue to partner with the Community Foundation to arrange and schedule training at the Foundation's facility and the local community college for staff, volunteers and station staff. Another partner, Bay Area Center for Independent Living, offers free computer training to seniors, which is available to our RSVP volunteers. A local volunteer association, of which the Director is Chairman, offers an annual workshop on volunteer management issues that station staff, Advisory Council members and volunteers may also attend.

According to the 2010 census, the Lower Eastern Shore is 70% white, 24% African American and 3.5% Hispanic or Latino, which is reflective of our current RSVP volunteers. We continue to recruit through presentations to the local AARP's, NAACP, VFW's and Telemon, a non-profit that provides a diverse array of programs for migrant farmworkers, children from low income families and other groups with special needs. Telemon also offers a translator to help communicate with volunteers who have varying degrees of English proficiency. The Maryland Home & Community Caregiver Resource Center also has minority volunteers who act as translators. We work closely with Bay Area Center for Independent Living to offer volunteer opportunities to their clients with disabilities. The Program Director is enrolled in a non-credit course at a local Community College for conversational Spanish and is planning to take a course on sign language to be better prepared to interact with volunteers with limited English proficiency and hearing impairments.

In an effort to retain volunteers, we communicate with volunteers whose hours have decreased over two consecutive months, to find out if there is a problem with their assignment and if they need to be reassigned. We continue to work with the stations to make sure our RSVP volunteers are placed in opportunities that challenge them and keep them active, as opposed to sitting behind a desk answering phones.

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To recognize our volunteers, we currently hold an annual recognition with lunch, door prizes, entertainment. We have a Volunteer of the Year as well as a 1000 Hour Club. Volunteers as well as Advisory Council Members help secure the in-kind door prizes, free entertainment and cash to help pay for the event. RSVP staff and station coordinators nominate RSVP volunteers for various awards, including, Governors Volunteer Awards, Commission on Aging recognitions and a local TV station program called the Jefferson Awards. We also work with a local affiliate for Home Instead, a national non-medical in home services provider that has an annual "Salute to Seniors" Award program. RSVP staff and station staff nominate volunteers who are 65+. Each state has a winner and then state winners go on to a national competition. In 2013 and 2014, RSVP volunteers were named as the Maryland winner. We host a small reception for all the nominees and the local affiliate provides framed certificates for them.

### **Program Management**

The existing RSVP Program is managed by a Project Director with six years experience as a director and thirteen years experience as a volunteer coordinator. The Director has taken advantage of Corporation sponsored trainings and webinars in an effort to keep a breast of current and changing regulations.

The RSVP Director, Station Managers and Volunteer Coordinators discuss all program regulations relating to the RSVP volunteers, including prohibited activities, performance of duties and sharing of information for performance measures. As Memorandums of Understanding are initially created and when they are renewed, station staff is made aware of activities that RSVP volunteers are prohibited from doing, station requirements such as handicap accessibility, discrimination language and providing data for performance measurement. The Director visits all stations periodically to insure compliance, and talk with volunteers.

The Director works with stations to offer a variety of opportunities to our volunteers. We keep abreast of changing community needs, and the Corporation's strategic plan to realign our focus areas. Currently we have only had to retire four stations that did not fit into our plan for this grant. Volunteers were offered other opportunities; many were already serving in other stations so the disruption was minimal.

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Our sponsor, MAC, Inc has over 30 years experience working with seniors, and develops an annual area plan identifying community needs. They contract with County Commissions on Aging, regional community action agencies, health departments, departments of social services, and Delmarva Community Services to administer services to seniors in the various counties. MAC has sponsored RSVP for 30 years; this partnership works to benefit RSVP for recruitment as well as volunteer opportunities in our primary focus areas of aging in place and access to health services. Relationships are in place with staff at each of these agencies to ensure data for performance measures can be obtained. We have tracked services to homebound seniors, and more specifically had volunteers involved in providing home delivered meals to seniors for several years. We have used client exit surveys to measure our outcomes and have been successful at reaching our target goals 90% of the time.

Additionally, the RSVP Director meets with all new, prospective volunteers. Identification is checked as part of the interview process and the volunteer signs the registration form which states their signature verifies that they are 55 or older. Prospective volunteers who are looking for activities outside of our focus areas are referred to non-profits in the area and given a contact person's name and phone number for each agency.

Our RSVP program has an Advisory Council of 15 members, representing all four counties. We recruit members who have knowledge of their county's needs and/or who have expertise in our focus areas. The Advisory Council meets quarterly and members are informed of Corporation regulations and strategic plans. The members help direct our program to meet the performance measures, help with reporting data and help with the annual recognition.

### **Organizational Capability**

One of the first area agencies on aging in the country, MAC has been in operation since 1972. MAC has been frequently recognized by Administration on Aging and Maryland Department of Aging for its excellence in program operations. MAC and its staff have received numerous federal, state, and local awards for service to older persons and their families. For example, within the last six months MAC received the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore's first "Pearls of Service Award." Given to MAC at the Foundation's 30th Anniversary Gala, this award came with a \$10,000 endowment. The United Way of the Lower Eastern Shore gave MAC's Executive Director its top annual award, the Barrett Community Service Award. The Executive Director was also received the Maryland Daily

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Record's prestigious Top Hundred Maryland Women Award.

In 2012, MAC was designated by the Administration for Community Living as the Aging and Disability Resource Center for the Lower Eastern Shore. In the past 5 years, MAC has greatly expanded its health and wellness programs and has the largest number of evidenced based health trainers and offerings in the state. As the result of a national demonstration grant and in conjunction with the Maryland Department of Aging, MAC is in the process of establishing the Maryland Living Well Center of Excellence. The Center will provide centralized licensing, data collection, and training for evidence based health programs.

The RSVP program is managed by a Project Director who has been with the program for nineteen years. The Project Director reports to the sponsor's Executive Director who has been with MAC for 35 years and has overseen the RSVP program since its inception, 30 years ago. The Executive Director reports to the MAC Board of Directors. MAC's Fiscal Officer also has 30 years experience with the RSVP program and its' requirements.

The Project Director and the Fiscal Officer work together to ensure the program follows statutes and regulations. The Project Director and other agency staff as appropriate participate in trainings and webinars to keep up with changes in regulations and to learn from compliance findings and best practices of the Corporation. We have worked with the State Office when questions arose and with our Financial Management Office representative when needed. The Director keeps a running total of expenditures, however, she and Fiscal Officer have just updated their procedure for reviewing budget expenditures line by line from twice a year to every quarter to ensure better management of the budget.

MAC has received and managed funds from many sources for 30+ years; including federal and state government grants, private foundations grants and local contributions. MAC has policies and procedures in place for the fiscal department to manage these grants effectively. The policies are part of the RSVP Policies and Procedures Manual. The accounting system used is QuickBooks Pro. All expenditures must be reviewed and approved by the Executive Director. Bills and reimbursement requests with documentation are submitted to the fiscal department. Checks with documentation are written by Fiscal Officer and given to Executive Director to sign. Checks are also co-signed by the

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treasurer of MAC's Board of Directors. All bank statements are opened by the Executive Director then reconciled by the Fiscal Officer. The statements are reviewed and signed by the Executive Director. An annual external audit, including the A-133 Review, is performed by a local CPA firm; currently that firm is TGM Group from Salisbury, MD. The findings of the audit are presented to the MAC Board of Directors. They have determined MAC Incorporated to be a low-risk auditee in the last audit dated June 30, 2013.

Purchases of equipment must be approved by the Executive Director. Purchases over \$1000 must have three price quotes prior to purchase. Equipment purchased is recorded in an equipment inventory with date of purchase and program for which it was purchased. Supplies are purchased and managed by the Administrative Assistant. The Agency Planner handles all IT maintenance, web safety and facility security.

### **Other**

N/A

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

N/A