

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

The Helpline Center has been around for over 40 years providing connections to volunteer opportunities in southeastern South Dakota. The agency is well known for the services provided to non-profit agencies and community volunteers. Adding the RSVP program to the Helpline Center's Volunteer Services will be a great addition allowing it to better serve all ages of volunteers and becoming a one stop shop for all volunteer needs.

South Dakota is ranked 7th in the nation for volunteering. 38.3% of residents over age 55 volunteer in South Dakota. According to the IRS, 85% of all charitable nonprofits have no paid staff and are run entirely by volunteers. Volunteering allows individuals to meet new friends, help others and make a difference in the community. Volunteers are always in need and whatever an individual's skill set and interest, there will be a non-profit in the service area that could benefit from their time and talent.

The Helpline Center will have an estimated 200 RSVP volunteers serving Minnehaha, Lincoln, Turner, and Union counties within at least 50 stations. They will provide services to the community by helping seniors live independently, tutoring and mentoring youth, assisting veterans and military families and providing disaster recovery assistance in the community.

The program's Primary Focus Area will be Healthy Futures. RSVP volunteers will participate in services to homebound seniors and disabled individuals, provide access to food and meals to the needy, and provide access to primary and preventive health care services. The Helpline RSVP volunteers will provide companionship and safe transportation for elderly. They will serve and distribute food for those who can't afford a meal and will educate Medicare beneficiaries about their options for prescription drug coverage.

After an absence of the RSVP program in the southeastern South Dakota service area for the past 6 months, the Helpline RSVP program will work to re-engage past RSVP volunteers and encourage them to participate in the program again. The program will solicit input from past RSVP volunteers, station supervisors and the general public on how we can grow our program and keep it successful. The program will gather input for planning and recruitment, create strategies and reach out to the communities served by the program.

At the end of the three-year grant, over 200 RSVP volunteers will serve the Helpline RSVP program. The CNCS federal investment of \$69,922 will be supplemented by \$7,770 for a total program budget of \$77,692.

## Strengthening Communities

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Strengthening communities through volunteering will be a key component of the Helpline RSVP program. The program will be serving Minnehaha, Lincoln, Turner, and Union counties.

The following data has been compiled from the United States Census Bureau website regarding the service area.

The total land mass of these 4 counties is 2,462.03 square miles. There are 50,538 residents 55 years old and over living in the service area.

Minnehaha County, created in 1862, is a political subdivision of the State of South Dakota encompassing 810 square miles. Minnehaha County is the most densely populated county in the state of South Dakota. The 2010 Census recorded a population of 169,468. The 2014 estimated population is 176,392 with 37,964 age 55 or older. The County also houses a large portion of the state's biggest city Sioux Falls. The population density for the county is 210 people per square mile. The racial makeup of the county is 88.1% White, 3.8% Black, 2.6% American Indian, 2% Asian, 2% other, and 1.9% two or more races. With a median income of \$52,530, 10.6% of the county's residents live below the poverty level.

Lincoln County, located in southeastern South Dakota also is home to a portion of the largest city in South Dakota, Sioux Falls. Lincoln County was incorporated in 1867. It includes an area of 576 square miles and population of 44,828 at last census. Lincoln County, the fastest growing county in South Dakota, now ranks as the third largest county. The Lincoln County Courthouse has marked the center of Canton, the county seat, for many years. The 2013 estimated population is 49,858 with 5,614 age 55 or older. The population density for the county is 77.7 people per square mile. The racial makeup of the county is 96% White, 0.6% Black, 0.5% American Indian, 1.3% Asian, 0.3% other, and 1.2% two or more races. The county's median income is \$73,340, with 5% of the county's residents live below the poverty level.

Turner County is home to South Dakota's oldest County Fair, celebrating 134 years of family fun. The four day fair is held in Parker, the county seat. Turner County was founded in 1871 and has 617.06 square miles. The 2013 estimated population is 8,361 with 2,752 (32.9%) age 55 or older. The population density for the county is 13.5 people per square mile. The racial makeup of the county is 97.1% White, 0.4% Black, 0.4% American Indian, 0.8% other, and 1.3% two or more races. The county's median income is \$50,565, with 8.2% of the county's residents live below the poverty level.

Union County is part of the Sioux City, IA--NE--SD Metropolitan Statistical Area. Progressive Farmer rated Union County second in the 2006 "Best Place to Live" in the U.S., because "its schools are good, its towns neat and its people friendly." The county seat is Elk Point, which was named for a nearby

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point in the Missouri River. Union County was organized in 1862 and currently sits on 460.54 square miles. The 2013 estimated population is 14,829 with 4,208 age 55 or older. The population density for the county is 31.3 people per square mile. The racial makeup of the county is 94.9% White, 0.6% Black, 0.7% American Indian, 0.7% Asian, 0.9% other, and 2.1% two or more races. The county's median income is \$64,496, with 4.4% of the county's residents live below the poverty level.

The Helpline RSVP program's Primary Focus Area will be on Healthy Futures, and the RSVP volunteers will work to meet the health needs of those within the service area by caring for and spending time with elderly and homebound individuals. They will provide transportation to and from medical appointments as well as take them to run errands. The volunteers will also deliver meals so they are able to stay in their homes even if they are unable to prepare meals. By focusing on these areas, we will work to make sure the elderly and disabled are able to receive independent living services and continue to age in place.

People want to remain in their homes safely and independently as they age. AARP in South Dakota commissioned a survey to learn more about the experiences of residents ages 50+ living in the Sioux Falls area. Most respondents said it is extremely (39%) or very (36%) important to them to remain in their community or area for as long as possible, and most rate it highly as a place for people to live as they age. 88% indicated that they lived here year round and very few live in Sioux Falls seasonally (6%) or temporarily (5%). It's critical for those who want to remain in their homes to have access to products, services, and conveniences that allow them to do so. Transportation is crucial to ensure access to essential services such as medical care and grocery shopping. The availability of adequate transportation enables seniors to live independently in their communities and helps to prevent isolation and need for long-term care placement. Many elderly who do not drive rely heavily on family and friends for transportation. Others must find community resources to provide transportation, as this vital support service may be their only connection to the outside world.

The RSVP volunteers will ensure more individuals receive emergency food from food banks and other organizations. According to Feeding South Dakota, 1 out of every 8 people in this state is food insecure, they do not know where or when they will have access to food on a regular basis. 1 out of every 5 children is at risk of going hungry. These are numbers that the RSVP volunteers can help reduce by working with local agencies like The Banquet, Feeding South Dakota, and Lunch is Served to provide for those that are in need, the nourishment they desire.

Meal delivery services are ideal for the elderly who live at home but who are no longer able to cook fresh meals for themselves every day. Meal delivery services give older adults and seniors the ability to

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continue living fully independent lives in the comfort of their own homes without the worry of obtaining food and preparing meals. According to a study by the Older Americans Act, 92% of seniors who received home delivered meals said it enabled them to live at home. 19,338 seniors in South Dakota are struggling with hunger. 74% of these seniors are receiving home delivered meals or meals-on-wheels.

Many people believe that the problems associated with hunger are confined to certain areas of the country or certain neighborhoods, but the reality is much different. Food insecurity often affects hard-working adults, children and seniors who simply cannot always make ends meet and may be forced to go without food. According to Feeding America, 12.3% of South Dakotans are food insecure.

RSVP volunteers will also provide the important service of relaying health related information to the elderly. Senior Health Information and Insurance Education (SHIINE) is a program in which volunteers provide free, confidential and unbiased information to Medicare beneficiaries. RSVP volunteers will inform, educate and assist consumers on Medicare and insurance issues so they can make timely, informed decisions and access resources to meet their needs. They will provide a number of clients with information on health insurance, access and benefits that they may not have received otherwise.

For many seniors, medical insurance and prescriptions coverage can be confusing. Determining which plan is best for a person's health needs can be a difficult process.

The key to a successful program is planning and providing an infrastructure to ensure the results are being met. We will do this by creating a dynamic team which includes leadership staff, a board of directions, station coordinators and volunteers. Collaboration among these groups along with annual evaluations and constructive feedback will ensure this program meets the determined outcomes and outputs set within the focus areas.

The Helpline RSVP program will focus on communications with both the volunteers and stations to ensure data collection is efficient and accurate in order to gauge success of outcomes. The RSVP Project Director will be in regular communication with all of the stations as well as the volunteers to make sure that their expectations are being met and we are providing the services that are defined in our work plan.

The Helpline RSVP program will use the Days of Service that are held throughout the year as marketing tools to the community on what RSVP is doing and encourage other 55 and older individuals to get involved. The program will have continuous communication with the RSVP volunteers so we know how and what our volunteers are doing. We will make sure they are

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submitting their volunteer hours and most importantly, they are having fun while making a difference in the community.

Members of the military and their families undergo great sacrifices in the name of service. Volunteers in our service area can step forward and give back to those who have earned our community's support through military duty. 17,430 veterans live in our service area in addition to an undocumented number of active military families. The Helpline Center houses a comprehensive Military and Family Support referral program, including the Courage to Call line. This program addresses the needs of the families, connecting them with services and helping to fill gaps where little help is available by providing volunteers to assist military families. The Helpline will continue to grow this program through RSVP. The program will be able to add more volunteers into the mix and expand the focus area.

There are many veterans and military families in our service area that are in need of services and support. Veterans who are visually impaired, elderly, or immobilized due to disease or disability, particularly those living in rural areas, have a hard time traveling to access health care. To work toward providing these Veterans with the most convenient and timely access to transportation services, community volunteers are in need. RSVP volunteers will be able to assist veterans through transportation to medical appointments as well as support other military programs that are already established in our communities.

Other activities that the Helpline Center provides to Veterans and Military Families include Courage to Call, Military and Family Support Coalition, information on upcoming Military Events, Education Resources, Military Family and Veteran Discounts, and Military Family & Friends Forums.

### **Recruitment and Development**

The Helpline RSVP program will provide well-developed high quality assignments by creating a system that allows for the RSVP volunteer to be able to evaluate their experience and make sure that their skills and interests are aligning with the stations expectations and duties offered. The RSVP Project Director will work closely with the stations and volunteers to make sure the lines of communication are always open and that they are able to provide feedback on a regular basis through surveys, email, phone calls, personal contact, and group networking events.

Volunteers will be able to meet and discuss their service activities with the RSVP Project Director, at this time they can change volunteer assignments, problem solve any issues that may have arise, and share ideas on how to make their experience better and more effectively meet their and the community's needs.

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Annually, the volunteers will be able to complete a volunteer satisfaction survey. This survey will provide valuable feedback regard the program and the volunteer's experience. This will be used to make sure the volunteers are enjoying their time as well as making an impact in the community. The Helpline RSVP program will provide opportunities for the volunteers to be able to build upon their skills, develop new abilities and leadership qualities, as well as enhance their community. The program will provide opportunities that will be meaningful to them and will allow them to have a better quality of life.

A detailed job description will be created and provided for each volunteer opportunity so that both the station and volunteer will be able to understand the expectations. The volunteer will meet with the RSVP Project Director to learn and understand the RSVP program and what is expected of them. The volunteer will get an understanding for the outcomes and outputs that their volunteering will provide to the community and how the data will be tracked.

Each volunteer will go through orientation with the station supervisor to make sure they are ready and able to perform the responsibilities that are outlined in the job description and work plan. At the orientation they will review the job duties, tour the facility that will be working in, receive background on the organization, and discuss the schedule of volunteer hours that will be completed. The stations are required to provide the necessary training, supplies, supervision and work setting that will provide a positive impact on the volunteer's experience.

The demographics of our service area differs from a highly populated large community such as Sioux Falls, to the more rural, small town communities such Elk Point and Parker. Recruitment is key to making the Helpline RSVP program a success.

The program will utilize targeted recruitment to focus in on the 55 year olds and over population that has the skills, interests and availability needed for the volunteer opportunities described in our work plan. The program will work to market our program and opportunities as clearly as possible, so that the potential volunteer is motivated to serve.

Recruitment will be a year-round responsibility. The program will work to keep the RSVP name and need for volunteers out in the public eye. We will work to build a diverse volunteer base by actively recruiting individuals of different cultural and racial backgrounds and with diverse skills. This includes involving volunteers who have disabilities as well as veterans and military families.

The majority of the recruitment will be done by word of mouth. We will rely on existing volunteers to encourage their friends, family and neighbors to serve. The Helpline will also take advantage of our existing networks of employees, patrons, volunteers and community organizations. By sharing our

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volunteer opportunities with these contacts, a number of potential candidates may emerge. The primary reason people volunteer is because they are asked, so we will be asking.

Managing volunteers effectively and providing them with adequate support will help us to retain them. It is more cost and time effective to retain a volunteer than to recruit a new one. The program will retain volunteers by having a volunteer management program in place and to apply its principles. Each RSVP volunteer will have orientation, training, supervision, evaluation and recognition. By doing so, all expectation will be provided, the lines of communications will be open and appreciation will be given to the volunteer.

The program will provide the RSVP volunteers with recognition by giving them personal praise and publicly thanking them, so they feel acknowledged for the hard work they are doing. The program will formally thank them at a group recognition event where they are acknowledged for their hours of service and for the work plan's outputs and outcomes that they have delivered.

Volunteers will also be thanked throughout the year by receiving hand written thank you notes and phone calls. Not every organization can afford a large workforce, but volunteers of all experience levels can contribute to their success. All they need is a little direction and a lot of appreciation!

### **Program Management**

The Helpline RSVP program will confirm that the volunteer stations are a public agency, secular or faith-based private non-profit organization, or proprietary health care organization that accepts the responsibility for assignment and supervision of RSVP volunteers in health, education, social service or related settings such as multi-purpose centers, home health care agencies, or similar establishments. The Helpline RSVP will make sure all stations are in compliance and when required, our volunteer station will be licensed or certified by the appropriate state or local government. We will do this by having checks and balances in place along with the required documentation to prevent prohibited activities from taking place.

The Helpline RSVP will develop and oversee our volunteer stations to provide a wide range of placement opportunities that appeal to persons age 55 and over. The program will verify that each volunteer location is capable of serving as a volunteer station for the placement of RSVP volunteers to meet locally identified needs. The program will perform random checks to make sure that the volunteer stations are having the RSVP volunteer perform their assigned service activity. The program will also make sure that all current and new volunteer stations comply with all applicable civil rights laws and regulations, including providing reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities.

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The Helpline RSVP will meet changing needs by working with the community as a whole. The program will solicit input from community members and Advisory Council members to enhance our program and ensure it is growing and serving a need in the community. Since the Helpline Center is a new applicant to the RSVP Competition, we are unaware of the current and past volunteer stations. The program will do the best to make sure that all volunteers see a minimum disruption during the transition. If there is a need to graduate volunteer stations, the program will do so with the utmost consideration and make sure the change goes smoothly for the volunteers. Volunteers associated with any graduation station, will be encouraged to provide other service opportunities through other active volunteer stations, or may continue to volunteer at the graduate volunteer station outside of the Helpline RSVP program.

The Helpline Center has a great track record of managing volunteers and has served as community leader in volunteer services since 1974. Since the agency's inception, we have managed volunteers and continue to serve as a clearing house for volunteer needs. The agency has been involved with many of the organizations that will serve as volunteer stations through the RSVP program. The Helpline will be able to build off of those current relationships to ensure that the RSVP volunteers are providing the services that were identified in our work plan and that we are able to accurately track the outcomes and outputs. We will also survey our volunteers, clients and client's families to ensure that the National Performance Measures outcome and outputs are measured, collected and managed appropriately.

The Helpline RSVP program will be in compliance with the RSVP federal regulations. The program will establish an Advisory Council to provide for community participation in the operation of the RSVP program. The members of the council will be from a variety of backgrounds and located throughout our service area. Members will be knowledgeable about human and social needs of the community, the ability of individuals 55 years and over, experience in community service and volunteering, and able to held with administrative and fundraising activities.

The program will guarantee that RSVP volunteers will be placed in a station that has a signed written statement that identifies project requirements, working relationships and mutual responsibilities. The program will also make sure that all RSVP volunteers are 55 years of age or older, agree to serve as a volunteer without compensation and reside in or nearby the community served by RSVP.

### **Organizational Capability**

The mission of the Helpline Center is making lives better by giving support, offering hope and creating connections all day, every day. The agency fulfills its mission through the following core service areas:

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211 Community Resources, Volunteer Services, Child Care Resources, Suicide and Crisis Support, and Military and Family Support.

The Helpline Center serves thousands of people every year by connecting individuals to resources and support, providing child care referrals, connecting people to volunteer opportunities and offering hope to individuals with thoughts of suicide.

The Helpline Center, formerly known as the Volunteer & Information Center, began serving the Sioux Empire community in 1974. From the beginning, one of the core services of the agency has been serving as a volunteer center by connecting community members with volunteer opportunities and promoting volunteerism.

The RSVP program will fit in perfectly with the Helpline Center's Volunteer Services. In just one year, the Helpline Center made over 36,000 volunteer-related contacts, encouraging individuals, children, seniors, older adults, church groups and companies to volunteer at 150 non-profit agencies. The Helpline Center maintains a relationship with all of the 150 non-profit agencies in our service area to ensure appropriate placement of volunteers with those organizations. The agency also provides a yearly day-long training for all volunteer managers teaching them the basics of recruiting, retaining and managing volunteers.

The Helpline Center is a 501 c 3 non-profit agency that is governed by a board of directors consisting of 18 members. The board provides overall fiscal oversight and elects a treasurer that reviews all financial records and statements on a monthly basis. The agency has successfully managed several federal grants over the years. The overall agency budget is approved by the finance committee and the full board. The RSVP program will be responsible for submitting their proposed budget to the Executive Director, who will include it with the overall agency budget submitted to the board of directors.

The Helpline Center incurred \$1,019,999 in expense in 2013. Expenses included salaries, employee benefits and taxes, occupancy, equipment, professional fees, supplies and miscellaneous expenses. The Helpline Center received revenue in the amount of \$1,040,839 during 2013 to support its programs and services. The revenue resources included United Ways (30%), Grants (30%), Special Events/Contract Services (27%), Government Entities (9%) and Contributions (4%).

Janet Kittams-Lalley, the executive director of the Helpline Center, will handle the oversight of the goals and budget for the Helpline RSVP program. This will include fiscal oversight, both financial and in-kind. She has been with the agency for over 18 years. Susie Ryks, the volunteer services director at the Helpline Center, will directly supervise the RSVP Project Director. The RSVP Project Director will

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be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the RSVP program. This will include recruiting and retention of volunteers, plus promoting the opportunity to organizations to become volunteer stations. The Helpline Center is committed to providing training and development opportunities for all staff. The Office Manager administers the compensation plan along with benefit administration. The Helpline Center will provide adequate office space for the RSVP staff in their main office space, which is located within the Non-Profit Center. The Helpline Center currently rents the office space and has been the longest serving tenant of the building. The RSVP program will have equipment and supplies purchased through the Helpline Center. The RSVP program will follow agency purchasing procedures submitting necessary documentation.

The Helpline Center has the capacity to secure the non-federal share of the RSVP program. In-kind support will be provided through several sources including local donations and in-kind services from the Helpline Center.

The following details the goals for the Helpline RSVP Program: 1) Successfully reintroduce the RSVP Program to southeastern South Dakota 2) Supplement and complement existing volunteer programs 3) Provide RSVP volunteers the opportunity to gain experience and knowledge 4) Provide RSVP volunteers a chance to utilize their skills and talents to make a difference in service to their community.

### Other

N/A

### PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A