

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

Within the Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP, many changes have taken place as a result of the new Performance Measures for the Corporation for National and Community Service. Longtime volunteers have been graduated from traditional volunteer stations such as hospitals, thrift stores, and congregate meal programs. Many new Volunteers have been recruited and will continue to be recruited as the Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP shifts their primary focus area to Environmental Stewardship.

The goal of this RSVP is to maintain an average 323 RSVP volunteers to serve our local communities. Some of their activities will include improving public land, creating and improving trails, and collecting and recycling waste materials, as well as providing access for seniors and veterans to medical appointments, and promoting food security and good nutrition in the community.

Because of the uniqueness of the geographic region, Environmental Stewardship is a growing volunteer opportunity. A multitude of parks, forests, waterways and wetlands provide sanctuary for birds and wildlife. Preservation and sustainable use of this natural habitat are key to protecting the local economy as well. Tourism, recreation, fishing, agriculture and timber harvesting are all part of the local landscape.

At the end of the 3-year grant, at least 25% of all Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP volunteers will be improving at-risk ecosystems and promoting behavioral change regarding waste management. With the acquisition by Humboldt County of 7550 acres of forested land to be converted into a county park, the numbers of trail building RSVP volunteers is expected to double.

The CNCS Federal Investment of \$90, 122 will be supplemented by \$40,032 of diverse non-federal sources, including in-kind contributions.

## Strengthening Communities

Nestled in the northwestern corner of California in a region with dense redwood forests and a modicum of towns and communities, a sense of place is a large part of every citizen's identity. Anyone living in Humboldt or Del Norte County knows they are living in a very special part of the world. The tallest trees and a network of rocky rivers flow through coastal mountains to meet the rugged Pacific Coast. Members of the rural communities that are scattered throughout both counties understand and value the environment that surrounds them. More than 50 parks (over 1000 square miles) of forests, reserves and recreation areas are the jewels of this part of the state. Half the world's

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old growth redwoods stand tall and resilient in this neck of the woods.

Linked by US Highway 101 and sharing Redwood National Park in both counties, the most populated areas are near the coast and are mostly small cities and towns with industries in dairy and small farming, fishing, and timber. Eureka is the largest city (approximately 26,961 people) and is the county seat for Humboldt. The second largest town is Arcata (population 17,726) and the home of Humboldt State University. Crescent City (population 7,394) to the north is the county seat for Del Norte.

This vast area of forested land provides a unique setting for community involvement. While land use issues regarding timber harvesting have been controversial in the past, education and awareness of the importance of sustainable forest practices and have brought people together over time. More community members understand and agree that sustainable practices that protect the watersheds of creeks and rivers also protect the longevity of local industries such as timber, fishing, tourism and recreation. Opportunities for volunteer participation in protecting and maintaining these assets are plentiful.

A primary example is the Arcata Community Forest. Although a city park, it is not your typical community playground. Arcata's community forest covers 2,350 acres of second growth redwood forest. Originally acquired by the City in 1955 to protect its water supply, the Arcata Community Forest became the first city-owned community forest in the State of California in 1979. With a plan to develop responsible, ecologically sensitive long-term forest management and recreational use, the revenues from sustainable timber harvesting would eventually be used to acquire more parkland.

By 2006, the Arcata Community Forest had expanded to include 175 acres purchased from a local timber company. Then, in 2009, an adjacent 185-acre conservation easement was donated. Since the mid 1990's, several of the previous logging roads have been converted to approximately 15 miles of trails for hikers, runners, bicyclists and equestrians. Volunteers have become increasingly involved in this conversion.

The environmental impact of the human carbon footprint is reflected in the City of Arcata Carbon Credit program. Arcata has become the first municipality in the nation to contract for the sale of forest carbon offsets. Carbon credits are certificates that represent a reduction of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

The revenue from these sales is used to decrease logging activities and allow tree stands to reach an older age. Redwood trees capture large amounts of carbon dioxide through photosynthesis in their heartwood, providing many benefits. Restoring forest biodiversity, improving water quality and

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enhancing recreation within the community are the positive results of longer rotation cycles of selective timber harvesting.

A recent development in expansion of parklands and environmental stewardship volunteer opportunities is the newly acquired McKay Community Forest in Eureka in 2014. Through the Trust for Public Land and a Federal Wetlands grant from US Fish and Wildlife, a California Natural Resources Agency River Parkways grant, and funds from the Wildlife Conservation Board, 1000 acres of forestland was purchased from a local logging company to be made into a county park.

Laden with old, eroded logging roads and century old railroad berms, the McKay Forest is home to various native wildlife such as salmon and steelhead, spotted owls, hawks and osprey, flying squirrels, bears, deer and mountain lions. Within this forest, there are patches of trees that are nearing 200 years old. Most of the old growth (never been logged) was removed in the late 1800's. The majority of the old-growth timber was moved out of the forest by railroad and steam donkeys. Some remnants of the old railroad berm still remain. Standards for protecting the land have increased over time. Since the 1940's, timber companies have been required to reforest their lands and conform to more environmental regulations, such as monitoring for protected species and protecting water quality.

This new opportunity greatly expands the need for community involvement and for volunteers to restore forested areas and creates more miles of brand new trails. The Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP is taking an active role in outreach through various media, and offering volunteer support and recognition. With this increasing need for volunteer involvement, the Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP has changed its primary focus to Environmental Stewardship.

Known for world-class rivers, beaches, forests and open spaces, the lack of a regional trail system to safely and adequately connect all of Humboldt's valuable assets was the cause for the development of the Humboldt Trails Council. Humboldt Trails Council evolved out of the Trails Trust of Humboldt Bay. The Trails Council expanded their mission and services and began looking for volunteers and members to help achieve the community vision of a connected network of trails and other related facilities for non-motorized transportation and recreation. The Humboldt Trails Council envisions a well-maintained network of accessible community pathways traveled by walkers and riders of all abilities, ages and means. Volunteers are educators and coordinators working to enhance the county's active transportation and recreation options, community health and well-being, economic vitality, fossil-free mobility, and appreciation of open spaces.

Among their goals is the interest in developing a regional trail system around Humboldt Bay.

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They also set goals to develop the Trail Stewards and Adopt-a-Trail Programs to help offset the cost of maintaining trails. A multi-use system that covers many miles and connects communities invites citizens to get outside and get some exercise. Trails are an important asset to the entire community.

In 2012, the Volunteer Trail Stewards became part of the Humboldt Trails Council and began working together with the City of Arcata to assist with Arcata Community Forest Workdays. Within the past year, monthly workdays have been established with growing interest and participation from the community. Trails for walking, running, bicycling and equestrian use have been created and restored. Invasive plants have been removed. Volunteers have become increasingly involved in this conversion by participating in the creation of new sections to bridge the newly acquired parcels. Arcata's Natural Resource Maintenance Crew Leader tracks all volunteer trail work and submits reports after each volunteer workday. Many RSVP members, under the direction of city staff, have made a significant impact in this process. Currently, the Arcata Community Forest has 19 miles of trails built for hiking, biking and horseback riding.

Through the Volunteer Trail Stewards, more workdays for volunteers have been scheduled in other communities such as the Hikshari Trail at the mouth of the Elk River on the Eureka waterfront. This semi-urban trail stretches and winds 1.5 miles along the Elk River and through the Elk River Wildlife Sanctuary. With easy access and flat paved trails, trail users can observe marsh reconstruction, migrant bird species, Humboldt Bay geology, and historical Wiyot village life. Volunteers help reduce environmental risk by removing invasive plants, clearing out illegal encampments, and planting native plants along the trail.

Mostly a paved asphalt trail, the Hammond Trail in McKinleyville extends out to the ocean and along the coast. The 5.5-mile accessible trail provides adventure, history and beautiful vistas. Constructed along a portion of the abandoned Little River and Hammond Railroad properties, the railroad line once extended from Humboldt Bay to the town of Crannell. Today it represents a beautiful, well-used segment of the California Coastal Trail. Here, as well, volunteers lower environmental risk factors by removing invasive plants, clearing out illegal encampments and restoring damaged areas.

Illegal camps that have been restored to their natural habitat and show a strong record of staying intact and a high rate of rapid regrowth because of the restoration. However, the issue of illegal camps is a complex problem that continues as social issues involving homelessness, mental health and drug abuse continue.

Increasingly, more volunteers aged 55 and older have signed up with RSVP to work with the

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Humboldt Trail Stewards and participate. This program has the highest number of new RSVP volunteers to date. With the newly acquired McKay Community Forest in Eureka, a steady growth in numbers of RSVP Trail Steward volunteers is anticipated. Many of the current RSVP Trail Stewards will be volunteers building new trails in the McKay Community Forest. The Arcata Forest Management Plan is the model for the McKay Community Forest. With community volunteer help, the total number of miles of trails to be created in the newly acquired forest in Eureka could reach as many as 15 new miles in the next 3 years. This will greatly increase the current number of miles through working redwood forests that serve as community parks in the county.

The number of miles of trails and waterways that are created or improved are collected by city and county staff members who supervise the work being done by volunteers using a digital-read measuring wheel. Those entities will provide the Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP with all of the data about created or improved trails.

Another growing community effort in the Environmental Stewardship Focus Area is Zero Waste Humboldt. This program's top priority is waste prevention. Zero Waste Humboldt has partnered with several other organizations and community groups to reduce the amount of waste generated at Humboldt County's largest fairs, festivals, rodeos, and community events. This requires large numbers of volunteers. They use recycled or composted content products in all aspects of their operations. Volunteers are trained prior to large events on how to direct and educate the public on where to put their waste products. At an Annual North Country Fair in the fall of 2013 in Arcata, Zero Waste Humboldt diverted 2,543 pounds of waste from the landfill. 17% of materials collected were recycled, and 42% was composted.

Zero Waste Humboldt is also working with College of the Redwoods and Humboldt State University as well as public schools. Both colleges have been part of a study on food waste. Zero Waste Humboldt is working on ways to reduce waste with the help of students and community volunteers doing research and creating better systems for these larger facilities. They will be utilizing volunteers to conduct a workshop in November of 2014 for organizations in the county that put on large events such as the Redwood Coast Jazz Festival, the Redwood Acres Fair, and rodeos in Fortuna.

In all of Zero Waste Humboldt projects, all materials are measured using scales that measure by weight rather than estimating volume. For large truckloads, Zero Waste Humboldt partners with the Eel River Disposal Company utilizing their truck scale. For smaller amounts, they own a weight scale and utilize it for barrels and trash cans full of recycling or compost. Therefore, RSVP will be provided with actual weights are reported to RSVP for data collection. Recruitment for Zero Waste Humboldt

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volunteers began in August of 2014 in preparation for the North Country Fair in late September.

Along the same vein of reuse and waste prevention, the mission of SCRAP Humboldt is to inspire creative reuse and environmentally sustainable behavior by providing educational programs and affordable materials to the community. SCRAP Humboldt is one of five such organizations in the nation. They collect discarded materials that can be sold for reuse. Hundreds of pounds of useable materials are diverted from the landfill. The arts and the environment are shared values of many in the Humboldt County community. SCRAP Humboldt trains volunteers in a myriad of opportunities including receiving and sorting materials, teaching workshops, and doing community outreach projects and special events. In their first year in operation, they have diverted 11,719 pounds from being shipped to a landfill outside of the county. Because of the variable nature of the items collected, SCRAP Humboldt uses a combination of estimation and actual weight for their data collection.

Because the CNCS Primary Focus Area of Environmental Stewardship is not considered to have measurable outcomes for work plans, the Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP will use volunteer stations among another focus area for reporting the required 10% in measurable outcomes.

The second largest volunteer programs in the Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP is the Area 1 Agency on Aging Volunteer Driver Program. The measures from this program fulfill the 10% that is required for a work plan that results in measurable outcomes. This program falls under the Healthy Futures Focus Area. Aging-in-place is a strong priority for many older adults in both rural counties. With transportation as a major obstacle for many, the A1AA Volunteer Driver Program recruits volunteers in Humboldt County to help older adults get to medical appointments. Volunteers receive an extensive background check including fingerprinting, a state Department of Motor Vehicles report, and a search on the National Sex Offenders Public Website. The volunteer must have a good, safe vehicle insured at a required level. Volunteers receive orientation and training before being scheduled to take seniors to their appointments. The measures for this program include the number of volunteers providing rides and the numbers of seniors receiving rides. Currently, 34 volunteers serve as volunteer drivers, which easily represent 10% of unduplicated RSVP volunteers.

The measures for this program include the hours of service by volunteers providing rides and the numbers of older adults receiving rides using the software database of the Volunteer Driver Program. This program is directly supervised by the RSVP Project Director and is a priority service of the Area 1 Agency on Aging.

A survey of all clients served is conducted yearly. Questions asked include timeliness of service, comfort and safety issues, manner of interaction with the volunteer ("Were they courteous?"),

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whether they had improved access to healthcare, and if this program helps to support their choice of living independently.

Other Healthy Futures stations include those that address food security. Community gardens exist in both counties. However, only a few of them provide food for those in need. One such program, Potawot Community Food Garden, is a 3-acre garden in Arcata that provides fresh produce for the United Indian Health Center through a Diabetes Prevention grant. Situated within the 20-acre Ku'wah-dah-wilth Restoration Area, the garden volunteers help tie together sustainable agriculture, environmental health, and the special population of Native American Elders.

The measures for this volunteer station include the number of hours served by volunteers and the number of people served by this program that increases their food security and access to good nutrition.

At Food for People in Humboldt, there are numerous programs where RSVP volunteers are involved in sorting, distributing, harvesting produce, and interviewing and assisting clients. These volunteers are an essential part of helping to make sure that people in need have enough food to eat. Collaborating with Food for People, St. Joseph's food Pantry serves the town of Fortuna. Measures for these stations include numbers of volunteers, poundage of food, and totals of families being served. In Del Norte, Rural Human Services is the volunteer RSVP station serving as the regional food bank.

Also in Del Norte County, through the County Administration's Veteran Services, RSVP volunteers provide rides for 200 veterans to medical appointments outside of the area. These RSVP volunteers (who are also veterans) drive an average of 60 hours a month transporting veterans to medical appointments that are either in Eureka (85 miles away) or as far as Roseburg, Oregon (154 miles north). One of these veterans is also on the Del Norte RSVP Advisory Council. Another veteran was recently recruited for the Humboldt RSVP Advisory Council.

Regarding veterans, The A1AA Volunteer Driver Program has 13 veterans as volunteers. Many of the veteran drivers drive veterans-in-need to the Veterans Administration Clinic as well as other medical appointments. RSVP veteran volunteers want to help and support other veterans.

Twenty percent of the current Humboldt Trail Steward volunteers are veterans. Some of those volunteers encourage other veterans to get involved and volunteer. As Zero Waste Humboldt volunteers sign up, the number of RSVP veterans will increase. In 2014, eighteen percent of RSVP volunteers are veterans who serving as volunteers in a variety of programs.

### Recruitment and Development

Since the new performance measures were introduced and implemented in 2012, the Humboldt/Del

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Norte RSVP evaluated the stations that it partners with and has shifted toward recruitment of volunteers in stations that fit within the six primary focus areas. Although somewhat painful, the process of "graduating" longtime RSVP stations began with hospital volunteers in the spring of 2013. This particular group of RSVP volunteers totaled one third of all Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP volunteers. Because hospital volunteers did not fit within the definition of the Healthy Futures focus, the decision was made to send letters to all volunteers and volunteer managers. The reaction was mild disappointment but acceptance of the changing focus.

Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP embarked on a new path toward measurable outcomes for volunteer activity. In the following year, outreach and direct recruitment enabled the program to essentially fully recover its total number through newer, more measurable volunteer stations.

There was also a learning curve for the new Project Director regarding the actual application of the performance measures. Some of the new stations appeared to fit the subject area but did not have measurable outcomes. A long-standing program of the Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP was the Pen Pals program. Older adults were paired up with a student in an elementary classroom. They spent the school year writing letters back and forth to each other and finally met at a party at the end of the year. This created many volunteers, but the contact and time spent did not meet the requirements for measurable input and outcomes.

The program also sought to include thrift stores in the Environmental Stewardship performance measures. However, upon inquiry, it was discovered that most of the thrift stores did not measure what they took in and what they saved from going to the landfill.

In the spring of 2014, more "graduating" of volunteers took place with community patrol volunteers, thrift stores, and congregate meal programs. The only concern we heard from some of these volunteers was the loss of mileage reimbursement. The Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP does not want mileage reimbursement to be the incentive for volunteers to get involved and serve their community. Once again, new efforts were made to recruit volunteers in measurable focus areas.

A decision was made to limit mileage reimbursement to those with low-income. Eligibility requirements are now based on the same requirements for recipients of Medi-Cal (California's version of Medicaid). Many of the new RSVP volunteers have increased environmental awareness. Most volunteers involved in trail-building and waste-reduction walk or ride their bike to workdays and are not interested in the benefit of mileage reimbursement. However, mileage reimbursement for the Volunteer Driver Program continues, regardless of driver income, because those volunteers use their own vehicles as part of the direct service they provide to the seniors they serve. Volunteers who travel

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into Redwood National Park continue to be reimbursed because it is a long drive to get to the park and because it is not possible to live inside the park.

Recruitment for all Primary Focus Area volunteers includes outreach through print media, radio interviews and public service announcements, and attendance at meetings, volunteer workdays, and volunteer fairs where interested community members come to find out about volunteer activities.

Documentation through photography and video provided by RSVP staff has been used in published articles and in power point presentations at city council, service club and other community meetings. Written articles and video programs are linked to the Area 1 Agency on Aging website and the agency's Facebook page.

Because the current RSVP Project Director has professional skills in video editing, small grants have been written and awarded to purchase a laptop computer and video editing software. Special video footage and other production services will be purchased in order to produce a professional program for volunteer recruitment, and public information and outreach.

The Area 1 Agency on Aging has a partnership with the Eureka-based newspaper, the Times Standard, and has a weekly column included in a "Boomers and Beyond" section, published each Tuesday in their regular Lifestyles Section. The RSVP Project Director writes a story every other week about volunteer opportunities in the community. The response has been very positive from the volunteer stations and from the community at large. It has become a major recruitment tool for RSVP. All published articles are archived in the Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP files.

Another regular outreach tool is a 3-minute spot on a local television station- K1EM News Channel 3. RSVP opportunities and recognition are announced on the 5 o'clock news program reaching homes all over Humboldt County.

In Del Norte County, articles about RSVP volunteer opportunities are published in the Del Norte Triplicate approximately every 2 months. The response has been measurable and immediate with phone calls and drop-ins of potential volunteers.

Both counties have radio stations that encourage interviews about volunteer activities on a regular basis. Stations include KHUM, KHSU, and KCRE in Crescent City.

In Humboldt, the local public radio station has a weekly program dedicated to senior issues developed and broadcasted by three RSVP volunteers.

The Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP has volunteer opportunities at stations that might be considered by some as Environmental Stewardship, but do not fit with the measurements for the Performance Standards. However, these volunteers and their stations will be kept as part of RSVP and included in

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the Community Need category. Most of these volunteers are older than boomers or are not physically able to build trails or lift recycling and waste materials. However, their interest and dedication to educating and protecting the environment is evident in their tenure as volunteers at these stations.

The Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary has been an RSVP volunteer station for many years. It is home to the City of Arcata's innovative wastewater treatment facility. The sanctuary is 307 acres, including freshwater marshes, salt marsh, tidal sloughs, grassy uplands, mudflats, brackish marsh, approximately five miles of walking and biking paths and an Interpretive Center. Volunteers at the center host thousands of birding visitors every year due to the 300 bird species traveling through the Humboldt Bay Region as a major stop in the migratory path of wild birds. Marsh volunteers lead tours of the wildlife sanctuary regularly and educate visitors about how the marshes turn wastewater into a thriving ecosystem.

At the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge at the south end of Eureka, volunteers work at the Richard J. Guadagno Headquarters and Visitor Center. The refuge is 4,000 acres and is a mosaic of mudflats, meadows, marshes and wetlands. Volunteers work with staff on all refuge programs including interpretation and environmental education, office assistance, wildlife management activities and a variety of maintenance duties. Without volunteer help, the refuge would have many less projects each year and would be open fewer hours for the public.

Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association has a visitor center along the Avenue of the Giants in southern Humboldt. One of the several RSVP volunteers working at the site is 94 years old and helps give information and guidance about the Redwoods to people from all over the world. She started volunteering at this visitor center in 1985.

Redwood National Park has been an RSVP volunteer station since 2005. Numerous volunteers over the years have hiked the trails to report maintenance needs, worked at visitor centers with the public, and photo archived much of the flora and fauna in the park.

Training for RSVP volunteers varies according to the needs of the particular volunteer station. For Environmental Stewardship, trail-building and waste prevention volunteers, and for Healthy Futures community garden volunteers, training from the volunteer donation of a licensed physical therapist was provided to promote safe working practices to prevent injury while volunteering. A free workshop was offered to volunteers to learn proper use of good body mechanics.

For the A1AA Volunteer Drivers, training is on-going at volunteer meetings which take place every other month. Topics include safe driving practices, dealing with challenging clients, adult protective mandated reporting, and numerous other important topics related to this service.

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Another growing volunteer program is the A1AA Disaster Volunteers. The Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP is working with community volunteers who are interested in Neighborhood Disaster Planning. RSVP staff has partnered with the American Red Cross to develop free training sessions open to the public using a series of worksheets for neighborhood community organizing focused on disaster preparation. In the 2013-14 fiscal year, 50 volunteers of various ages were trained in how to organize their neighborhood in the event of a major disaster. More effort will be focused in the coming year to recruit many of these volunteers as RSVP members and have regular follow-up trainings.

A recent effort has been made by Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP staff and disaster volunteers to recruit and train elected public officials such as city council members and mayors as models for their communities in being prepared for disaster. Several municipalities have responded to the offer of training. Each municipality provides the facilities for these trainings. RSVP staff, volunteers and American Red Cross volunteers will provide the training throughout the fall of 2014.

In Del Norte, HAM radio operators have become an RSVP station. Focused training for licensed HAM operators on how to respond in the event of a disaster is provided as part of the training for those volunteers. In collaboration with American Red Cross AmeriCorp volunteers, these HAM radio operators will receive the specially designed Neighborhood Disaster Planning training in order to better facilitate communications needs in the event of a major disaster. Efforts to recruit more 55+ volunteers occur through outreach through various local media outlets. Del Norte County is a primary location for disaster planning because of the specific geographical location of the Crescent City harbor and the history of tsunamis in the area.

Another developing RSVP volunteer recruitment effort in Del Norte is for the Bar-O Boys Ranch through the Del Norte County Probation Department. The 42-bed facility is set among the redwoods in the northern-most part of the state in Six Rivers National Forest. Wards in the program are given opportunities for personal growth and social development. There are a wide range of vocational programs at the facility where RSVP volunteers are being recruited to teach skills to help the young men find work when they are released. All RSVP volunteers receive special training from the Bar-O Boys staff to work with the wards in the program.

Because of the rural aspect of the region and the significant distance from large metropolitan populations, diversity in both counties is limited. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Humboldt's population totals 134,623 with 14.2% over 65 years of age. 82% of Humboldt's residents claim white, 9.5% claim Latino, 5.5% claim Native American, 2% claim Asian, and 1% claim African American. 10,336 are Veterans. The median household income is approximately \$40,000. Persons below

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poverty level are at 19.7%.

In Del Norte County the current population is 28,610. (This includes the inmates of Pelican Bay State Prison.) 14.4% are over 65 years of age. 78% claim white, 11 % claim Native American, 4 % claim African American, and 4% claim Asian, 3% claim Latino. 3,234 are Veterans. The median household income is \$39,626. Persons below poverty level are at 21.5%.

Many of the Humboldt RSVP volunteers are retired professionals. All RSVP applicants are asked when they sign up if they are veterans. A large percentage of community members are college educated and several are retired college professors from Humboldt State University or College of the Redwoods Community College. Those with lower income are often not available for volunteer activity because they are still working. Although Humboldt's RSVP volunteers may not be very diverse economically, the recent influx of boomer-aged retired professionals with a pension income provides the opportunity for those individuals to give back to the community with a wide range of skills. The valuable skills educated professionals bring to local community efforts are beneficial to many of the non-profits partnering with RSVP. Programs like HICAP (Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program) provide valuable professional services by trained professionals that particularly assist low-income individuals.

Due to the remote location of Del Norte County and a greatly diminished timber industry, there is great disparity in income levels due to the primary employers in the area. A state-run maximum-security prison pays state level wages. Wages for county government jobs, school district jobs, and the Yurok Tribe contrast with low-paying employers such as Walmart and Home Depot. Higher income timber-supported families have been replaced with families of prisoners. The county is often self-described as a community of have's and have not's. Another limiting factor is that 70% of the county is state or federal parkland and does not generate tax revenues for the community.

The majority of Del Norte RSVP volunteers serve at the Del Norte Senior Center (DNSC). Although it is a congregate meal site, the Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP will continue to partner with DNSC as a volunteer station as part of the 30% Community Need category. The center is the link to the senior community in Del Norte. DNSC provides volunteer opportunities for many seniors who are low-income. As with many congregate meal programs at senior centers, this center also serves as a social network for seniors and helps prevent social isolation and depression among the community's aging population. It also provides food security for those in need.

In order to reach more of the volunteers and thank them in a more meaningful way, the Humboldt RSVP focus has shifted to supporting the individual station's type of service. For the

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Volunteer Trail Stewards, recognition often includes providing food at volunteer workdays such as a lunchtime barbecue at the finish of the work session. For the A1AA Volunteer Drivers, a scenic boat cruise around Humboldt Bay brought volunteers together as an appreciation for their important work. Donations are being sought from local businesses for gardening tools that can be given to community garden volunteers. Not only has this process reached more volunteers, it has made volunteer recognition expenses more targeted and efficient.

There will be recognition in April of each year for milestone volunteers. They will be awarded pins and certificates signed by public officials at a County Board of Supervisors meeting.

In Del Norte County, the number of volunteers is smaller, as is the community. The annual recognition event is more successful there because everyone knows each other. The attendance rate has been much higher at their events so this tradition will continue.

### Program Management

Each Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP station has a signed Memorandum of Understanding outlining their partnership with public or private non-profit organizations and clarifying regulations regarding prohibited activities. The Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP provides outreach and promotion of volunteer opportunities for each station including recruitment, referral and enrollment services. The RSVP Project Director instructs volunteer managers on how to report hours monthly. Volunteer managers are informed about volunteers at their station who are eligible for mileage reimbursement, and require the manager's signature on each reimbursement timesheet. Reimbursement policies and deadlines for submissions of reimbursement requests are specified on the back of all reimbursement timesheets.

The Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP Project Director writes articles and utilizes radio, television, and social media to publicize the volunteer stations volunteer opportunities.

The Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP provides supplemental accident, liability and excess auto insurance for all volunteer members of RSVP.

In Humboldt, RSVP is changing the volunteer recognition tradition of a large, annual catered event to more frequent visits to sites- eliminating rental and catering fees. Attendance was low at the events that were planned in the last two years. This may have been a result of the "graduating" of so many long time volunteers.

The RSVP Project Director annually assesses volunteer placements regarding safety. RSVP stations fill out a safety checklist that is filed with each station's MOU. However, with more outdoor stations working in the Environmental Stewardship focus, a different form has been developed for

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those stations. It is a signed agreement that safety precautions are made by those stations for their volunteers. RSVP agrees to work with them on safety training opportunities for their volunteers.

When the Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP decided to change the mileage reimbursement policy, an addendum to the Memorandum of Understanding was sent to all RSVP stations. For any newly acquired stations, the current reimbursement policy will be included in the form.

The Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP does not assign RSVP volunteers to conduct or engage in religious or political activities.

All Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP stations agree to supply data for reports measuring volunteer impact on community needs.

The volunteer stations agree to conduct all background checks for their volunteers and provide their own orientation for their volunteers including any specialized training. Each station interviews each applicant and decides whether or not to work with each volunteer applicant. Each station is required to provide the tools necessary to perform the volunteer work. If they choose to dismiss an RSVP volunteer at any time during their tenure as a volunteer at their station, RSVP staff will work with the volunteer managers to deal with problems with volunteers referred by RSVP.

The volunteer station agrees that they cannot replace employed workers with RSVP volunteers. All volunteer stations are required to fill out and sign a checklist and statement that they will provide reasonable accommodations for volunteers with disabilities or those with limited English language proficiency. Each Memorandum of Understanding includes a prohibition of discrimination clause. All Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP stations agree to supply data for reports measuring volunteer impact on community needs.

The recent history of the Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP includes several staff changes since the RSVP Renewal grant was written in 2011. The Area 1 Agency on Aging has a new Executive Director, and RSVP has a new Project Director. Both started at the agency in June of 2012. Both of the previous staff members left their positions suddenly with little overlap for training the new employees. Although this was initially a challenge, it provided an opportunity to reshape the Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP to better fit the new standards that were being introduced at that time by the Corporation for National Community Service.

It became clear that overseeing the vast number of RSVP stations in both counties (between 60 and 70) was challenging for one person in Humboldt and for a part time person in Del Norte. A concerted effort has been put into recruiting volunteers for specific stations that fit within the six focus areas and reducing the number of stations while increasing the number of volunteers in focus area

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stations. As of the submission of this application, the number of volunteer stations is 35.

With half as many volunteer stations, the RSVP Project Director will have more time and ability to perform meaningful site visits. The RSVP Project Director has been able to attend the monthly volunteer workdays in the Arcata Community Forest, helping with recruitment, retention and support. This has also been an opportunity to document and use photography and video to promote more volunteers for this station.

The second largest RSVP volunteer station is the A1AA Volunteer Driver Program. The program is administered out of the RSVP office in Eureka. The Volunteer Driver Program Coordinator is directly supervised by the RSVP Project Director. Awareness of the needs and activities of individual volunteers has increased, and all files and data are directly available to the RSVP Project Director.

In Del Norte, the Del Norte Senior Center is also the location of the office of the part-time RSVP staff member who oversees all Del Norte RSVP stations and volunteers. She is able to have direct and regular contact with the majority of volunteers in Del Norte as well as recruit volunteers from the Senior Center for other stations.

Other volunteer stations include A1AA clerical assistants, board members, RSVP Advisors, clerical volunteers at the American Cancer Society and the American Red Cross. Long standing traditional RSVP stations include St. Vincent de Paul food programs in both counties, Hospice of Humboldt, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate), a senior exercise volunteer in a remote town called Bridgeville, adult literacy programs in both counties, the Breast and GYN Health Project, and two early childhood tutor/mentor programs administered through the county school districts in each county. These stations have smaller numbers of volunteers. Relationships are developed with each of the stations and the individual needs from those stations are worked out between the volunteer managers and RSVP staff.

Because of the collaborative relationship with the local newspapers, more attention can be given to the focus area stations and their importance to the community. Site visits are combined with interviews and photo opportunities. All these activities help build relationships between RSVP staff, volunteers and their stations.

A new system for documenting volunteer hours was developed to more accurately reflect volunteer contributions. Each Volunteer Manager at the RSVP volunteer stations receives a roster via email at the beginning of each month. At the end of each month, the roster is filled in by the station's Volunteer Manager and sent in to the RSVP office. A new roster for the next month is emailed to each station serving as a reminder to send in the roster from the previous month. This system has greatly

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improved the accuracy of the Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP reporting.

As Baby Boomers began to retire and look for volunteer opportunities, and as the current RSVP Project Director started to recruit volunteers, there was a clear shift in interest in activities. The majority of Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP volunteers worked for many years in hospitals, libraries, and thrift stores, and as community patrol volunteers and at Senior Centers. However, the average age of these volunteers was in the late seventies and early eighties. New recruits are in their late fifties and early sixties. These new volunteers understand the meaning of data and its impact. They are less interested in the "benefits" of RSVP (mileage reimbursement, insurance, and thank you parties) and more aware of the pressing community needs, especially regarding the environment, and the importance of measuring the impact of their work.

An annual RSVP survey is conducted in the fall at the North Country Fall Equinox Fair, annual health fairs, and through media publications to stay current with community interests and needs.

Environmental Stewardship is new to the Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP, but is not new to the community. The RSVP Project Director is working closely with the volunteer managers of non-profits and government agencies focusing on best practices for the environment. Many of these individuals have lived in Humboldt for decades, went to college at Humboldt State University, stayed abreast of the issues involving the local environment, and are now entering their elder adult years with energy and vitality that is new and different from the previous volunteer population. Many aging boomers are just beginning to realize their potential as a retired person. Many of them want to do volunteer work that is outside and benefiting the environment. The possibilities are great.

Just as Environmental Stewardship is a new focus for the Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP, Boomers are a new cohort. Concern for the environment and sustainable forest practices are not new and are less controversial in this former timber industrial hub. Sustainable Forest practices are more universally accepted within the timber industry and by community members. The Arcata Community Forest is a renowned model for sustainable forestry and will be studied as part of the new development of the McKay Community Forest.

Humboldt State University's award-winning faculty in Natural Resources trains students in cutting edge research in environmental sciences. With Redwood National Park at its core, the Humboldt/Del Norte region is a living laboratory for forestry, fisheries biology, and wildlife management. Vast forests, numerous rivers and watersheds, marshes and wetlands provide opportunities for research, jobs, and volunteer involvement. Even Humboldt State University's Social Sciences Department has a Masters program called "Environment and Community" which is a multi-

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disciplinary set of courses that attracts a large number of students. The academic community understands measurable impact and data collection and can assist in the measures that are required in RSVP reporting.

Recycling and reducing waste started in Arcata on Earth Day in 1970 with the opening of a non-profit recycling center. Early in the development of recycling in the region, more emphasis was put on resource conservation (also known as source reduction) than on landfill diversion. Economic development projects and businesses were supported by the Recycling Center by developing value-added products made in Humboldt before being shipped out of the county. Fire and Light makes glass dinnerware products made from recycled glass; J and T Plastics recycles plastic to produce molds for agricultural and industrial use; Kernan Construction recycles discarded building materials for reuse in road work and other construction; and SCRAP Humboldt is a center for creative reuse. All these local businesses were born out of the Arcata Recycling Center. Measuring by weight is built into these businesses as common practice due to high shipping costs as a major factor in this remote region. Shipping raw materials out of Humboldt County pays less than those products that are value-added.

The Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP will work closely with the Environmental Stewardship stations to make sure accurate reporting is submitted and has great confidence in these stations in their ability to provide the data.

Both counties have RSVP Advisory Councils that are composed of community members who are actively involved and engaged in their communities. In Humboldt, the RSVP Advisory Council is composed of six community members from different parts of the county. Three of the six members are former County Supervisors, two of the six either are or have been mayors of their towns, one is a Native American Community Planner and Consultant, and one is a veteran who also worked with another RSVP advisor to write the first grant for RSVP back in the 1970's.

In Del Norte, there are currently three who are all active volunteers in their community. One volunteer is a veteran who drives veterans to medical appointments. Another is a volunteer manager of two RSVP stations, and one is an American Red Cross Volunteer and a HAM Radio operator.

Meetings are held quarterly in each county. Advisors are also available through email communication throughout the year. They have been called upon to advise RSVP about potential partnerships and sources of funding.

All RSVP volunteers are screened by the volunteer managers of each station. The RSVP application requires all applicants to report their date of birth, ethnicity and status as a veteran. All applications are signed in ink, dated, and additionally reviewed and signed by the RSVP Project

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Director before being entered into the volunteer database. If volunteers are placed in stations where they are interacting with vulnerable populations, it is the volunteer station's responsibility to require a background check including a live scan (fingerprinting) and a check on the National Sex Offender Registry. Volunteer stations are required to wait for the results of these checks prior to the volunteer having contact with their clients.

All Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP stations are required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding provided by RSVP prior to recruiting and signing up RSVP volunteers. The original is also signed by the RSVP Project Director, filed in the office in Eureka, and a copy is sent to the volunteer station.

### **Organizational Capability**

Since its founding in 1980, A1AA has continuously developed and implemented a system of policies and procedures in the areas of financial, personnel and general organizational matters. A1AA's Board of Directors approves all policies and requires that the policies establish an overall plan and be supported by procedures that define the steps to be taken and methods to be used to carry out established policies.

A1AA's Fiscal Administration Policy addresses financial reporting, budget control, allowable costs, internal control, accounting records and source documentation per the Standards for Financial Management Systems under Title 45 CFR, Part 74, Section 21. Additions or revisions to the Fiscal Administration Policy are initiated by the Director of Finance, reviewed and approved by the Board's Finance & Audit Committee before being presented to A1AA's Board of Directors for adoption.

A1AA's Employee Handbook establishes policies covering personnel issues. Additions or revisions to the Handbook are reviewed and approved by the Board's Personnel Committee before going to the Board for adoption.

General organizational policies and procedures cover prudent business practices (e.g., document retention). Senior staff or Board committees recommend new policies or revisions to existing policies for adoption by the Board of Directors.

The RSVP Project Director supervises two part-time staff and is a member of the Leadership/Management team of the Area 1 Agency on Aging. Job duties include establishing new and maintaining existing volunteer opportunities in both counties; actively recruiting, referring and supporting RSVP volunteers; providing multimedia outreach including articles twice a month for the local newspaper; preparation of all RSVP reports to CNCS; accurate management and supervision of volunteer and staff timesheets; regular communications with the A1AA Executive Director and volunteer managers of RSVP stations; planning and implementation of trainings for volunteers;

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quarterly meetings with RSVP Advisory Councils (one in each county); providing on-going and yearly recognition of volunteers in cooperation with their station volunteer managers; maintaining Memorandum of Understanding with all RSVP stations; overseeing the RSVP program budget; preparing eGrant renewal application; preparing and submitting timely reports to other funding organizations; maintaining the volunteer database; serving on other councils, committees and boards in the community; attending meetings, training workshops and conferences sponsored by CNCS and other appropriate sources; and participating in preparation and response in the event of major disasters.

In Humboldt, the part-time RSVP staff member is primarily responsible for the coordination and day-to-day management of the A1AA Volunteer Driver Program. This position assesses the needs of clients and riders- linking them to the available transportation services in Humboldt County. Responsibilities include intake and administration of transportation requests and outreach, recruitment, screening, training and support of volunteer drivers. Some assistance entering data into the RSVP database is included as well as a small amount of non-RSVP work.

In Del Norte, the part-time RSVP staff member is responsible for managing the recruitment, referral, placement, training and maintenance of volunteers in the Del Norte community with agencies and programs that meet the criteria for RSVP stations.

Both part-time RSVP staff members attend local trainings, A1AA monthly staff meetings, and meet with the RSVP Project Director once a week. Both staff members also make presentations to groups in the community and will participate in disaster response in the event of a major disaster.

The purpose of the Humboldt/Del Norte RSVP is to provide Humboldt and Del Norte citizens who are 55 and "better" with opportunities in volunteer service that serve important community needs and enrich the lives of these volunteers. The Humboldt/Del Norte staff is very clear about these goals and works to improve service to the community's older adult population every day.

For 34 years, A1AA has continuously managed numerous federal and state contracts -- primarily Older Americans Act and Older Californians Act funding passed through the California Department of Aging (CDA). Since 1984 A1AA has administered the federal funding for RSVP and sponsored that program.

A1AA's fiscal department consists of one full-time Director of Finance with a CPA background who has been with the agency 12 years. Support staff includes one part-time Bookkeeper (4 years of experience) and one part-time Accounts Payable Clerk (12 years of experience). A1AA regularly submits timely and accurate budgets, monthly or quarterly financial reports and closeouts to its

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grantors. The Agency undergoes an annual Single Audit by an independent CPA firm. A1AA's Single Audit reports have consistently resulted in unmodified (formerly unqualified) opinions with no findings or questioned costs. In addition to its annual Single Audits, A1AA is subject to periodic fiscal monitoring visits and grant-specific audits by CDA every three or four years.

### **Other**

not applicable

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

not applicable