

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

An estimated 350 RSVP volunteers will serve in Athens, Hocking, Vinton, Jackson, Lawrence, Ross, Pike and Gallia counties in southeast Ohio. Their activities will include assistance with food pantries, nutrition sites, companionship with isolated seniors, tutoring and mentoring and a wide array of other activities. The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures. At the end of the three-year grant, over 5,000 homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities will have received food, transportation, or other services that allow them to live independently.

Over 3,000 individuals will report increased household food security for themselves and their children as a result of CNCS-supported services. The CNCS federal investment of \$ 144,618 (annual support) will be supplemented by over \$252,000 (annual match) which comes from state funding support (Ohio Department of Aging) local United Way contributions, Ohio Job and Family Services and in-kind support for office space, in-service rooms and a number of other sources.

The mission of the Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development (COAD) is to provide a unified voice and representation for its member agencies and the constituents that they serve - primarily low-income families, children, and the elderly. We have 5 years of experience serving the counties previously mentioned, in the RSVP program alone. Since food security is a challenge for these counties we chose Healthy Futures as our primary focus area. Isolation of elderly and disabled populations also challenges the existing services in these counties. There were high numbers of volunteers already participating in school programs and we want to build on this history as well as add Project More to the range of educational efforts volunteers will undertake.

We are requesting \$144,618.00. We will provide volunteers in a range of service categories: Health/Nutrition, Human Needs (companionship), School Readiness and Child Literacy/Tutoring, and Community Based Volunteering.

The RSVP volunteers will address a number of needs that are pervasive in our Appalachian communities. The needs fall into the following basic categories: food insecurity, senior citizen isolation, health and nutritional deficiencies, lack of achievement in elementary educational arenas for at risk children, shrinking capacity among social service agencies, diminished funding at social service agencies and lack of adequate transportation for low income families and veterans. We will use proven tutoring models to improve academic performance for children, face to face visits (as in Senior Companion Program) to alleviate seniors' isolation, and will promote best practices among food pantries.

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The outcomes are delineated in each work plan, but the overall impact will be to improve children's academic performance, increase access to medical care, assist non-profits in delivering more critical community services, enroll more people into food stamp and other programs, improve the fundraising and marketing for various charities, increase access to nutritious food in our region and help educate low income and at risk families about the programs available to them. Lastly, there is an overall effort to recruit and train more volunteers of all ages.

Introduction to Community Needs: The Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development (COAD) based in Athens, serves 36 counties with several Senior Corps programs including Foster Grandparents (FGP), Senior Companions Program (SCP), and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). The mission COAD is to provide a unified voice and representation for its member agencies and the constituents that they serve - primarily low-income families, children, and the elderly. Currently engaging over 300 volunteers, in the future we intend to provide volunteers in a range of service categories. We will focus on Healthy Futures, specifically food security, companionship and transportation, but also provide support in School Readiness and Child Literacy/Tutoring and Community Based Volunteering.

### **Strengthening Communities**

The RSVP volunteers will address a number of needs that are pervasive in our Appalachian communities. The needs fall into the following basic categories: food insecurity, senior citizen isolation, health and nutritional deficiencies. Needs also include lack of achievement in elementary educational arenas for at-risk children, shrinking capacity and diminished funding among social service agencies, and lack of adequate transportation for low income families and veterans.

COAD staff is highly knowledgeable through analysis and experience, in the needs of these communities. The Appalachian heritage of the region is still evident. There are still wood-frame houses with little or no plumbing facilities. Many areas of the counties are not served by rural water companies. Mobile homes with poor insulation and at high risk from fires are common housing for many residents. Limited access and poor infrastructure discourage business from locating in the area. Schools often have fewer funds than the state average and academic achievement is below Ohio averages. Unemployment rates run high, with three counties showing up in the top ten counties in the state of Ohio for highest unemployment. Area wide, many residents are impacted in various ways by lack of services. Such barriers as poor education, lack of job opportunities, substance abuse, high poverty rates, and natural disasters exacerbated by the hilly terrain and poor infrastructure, and high use of public assistance are all indicative of service needs in the area.

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By way of example, Vinton County has more than 32% of those under the age of 18 living in poverty whereas the state average is only 21%. In 2010 Vinton County had more than 19% of its residents over the age of 65 while Franklin County had less than 14% over 65 (Scripps Gerontology Center 2010). In these rural counties, not only are there higher percentages of seniors they are also more isolated and have fewer resources available than the urban areas in Ohio. Some areas served by RSVP have per capita incomes under \$17,000 (state average is over \$28,000 as stated by Ohio Dept. of Job and Family Services in 2009). This is not just problematic-- this per capita income has actually gone down since 2000. Vinton County went from a per capita income in 2000 of \$22,951 to \$17,200 in 2009. For all the counties in the RSVP service area there are more than 34% of residents receiving emergency food assistance (at some point in 2013) compared to under 21% for the average in Ohio. Even though Vinton County exhibits some of the worst statistics for this area, all other counties served by RSVP have higher rates of poverty, lower rates of educational attainment and higher rates of usage of emergency food systems than Ohio averages.

Access to health and nutrition services are limited, as is medical insurance for many residents. As pointed out by the Athens Foundation in 2012, "Southeast Ohio ranks 2.5 percent higher in food insecurity than the national average. There are over 13,000 people (or around 20 percent) of people in Athens County who are food insecure. Forty percent of the residents in Athens County qualify for food stamps." Many surrounding counties are in even worse standing when it comes to food security.

The counties served through this grant suffer from economic loss, with a poverty rate over 21% and 38% for those under 18 years of age in some parts of the territory. There is a public assistance dependence rate of 29.5 %. Lack of adequate food is a documented problem. Area food pantries and outreach centers provide food to hundreds of families, supplementing the families in need. Budget cuts have reduced the number of site personnel who are available to assist with food distribution. CARE Outreach and the Jackson Food pantry report significant increases in requests for food assistance since 2000, with a corresponding drop in food available. Food pantries and outreach centers which supply food to needy families are in need of volunteer support to carry out food distributions.

Additionally, Athens County has over 2,600 residents dependent on public assistance and Hocking County has another 1,000. This region of the state has a food insecurity rate over 19% and a child food insecurity rate of over 21% as reported by the Southeast Ohio Foodbank. This is as compared to the national average of 16 percent. That rate increases to 23.8% for children under 5. Lack of adequate food is a documented problem. Rising costs to cover handling from the Southeast Ohio

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Food Bank, a regional, low-cost food bank, have further jeopardized local food pantries.

Food insecurity is a problem for the seniors in this area. According to 2010 census data, 21% of residents in this region were senior citizens over the age of 65. This is 7% more than the national average. The population of the region remains fairly stable for this age bracket, according to the Ohio Department of Development. It is anticipated that a similar number of seniors living alone still exist in the region. According to 2010 census data, 30.7% of residents were senior citizens over the age of 60 who lived alone in Athens and Hocking Counties.

The local Boards on Aging (Area Agencies 7 and 8) report that a significant number of these seniors are physically and/or financially unable to prepare adequate meals to meet their nutritional needs. These seniors are at risk of nutritional failure, which could lead to long-term health problems and loss of independent living. Budget cuts have reduced the number of site personnel who are available to assist with congregate meal services. It is critical that these seniors have access to emergency food and nutritious meals to support their health and reduce medical intervention. According to 2010 census data, 30.7% of residents were senior citizens over the age of 60 who lived alone in Athens and Hocking Counties. There is no public bus service to provide transportation to medical appointments for Medicare or Medicaid recipients, and services by area senior centers are limited. Every senior has a need to see a physician and transportation services are critical.

As cited by the Athens News: "Food insecurity is directly related to poverty," noted David Holden, director of Ohio University's dietetics program. "With restricted food budgets, families are almost forced to buy cheap, which usually means buying unhealthy." Holben said the quantity of food that can be purchased often takes precedence over the quality. With healthy food such as fruits and vegetables being more expensive than cheap, fast food, families often choose the latter. Holben predicted that problems with nutrition and food insecurity will continue to spiral upward as food and gas prices escalate. "Currently with the rising price of fuel, I believe that many households food budgets are getting squeezed a bit tighter," he said.

According to the 2010 Feeding American Food Pantry report, clients are asked six questions about their food security in a short form version of a measure employed by the USDA. Not surprisingly, a large number of all pantry clients report being food insecure, since seeking services may be an indication of their uncertain ability to feed their households. Nearly two out of 5 pantry clients (43 percent) living in food secure households visit food pantries on a recurrent basis. The report goes on to say, "it highlights the vital role that food pantries can play in the nutritional safety net for families struggling to put food on the table." (italics added)

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The primary target areas under Healthy Futures are:

H10: Number of individuals receiving emergency food from food banks, food pantries or other nonprofit organizations.

H11: Number of individuals receiving support, services, education and/or referrals to alleviate long-term hunger.

H12: Number of individuals that reported increased food security for themselves and their children (household food security) as a result of CNCS-supported services.

H8: Number of homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities receiving food, transportation or other services that allow them to live independently.

H9: Number of homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities who report having increased social ties/perceived social support.

We have many volunteers engaged in numerous activities that will generate outputs and outcomes that align with these target areas to meet National Performance Measures. Those activities are food collection, food distribution, emergency food program administrative support (data collection, fund raising, evaluation), referrals on resources to alleviate food insecurity, education on food insecurity, providing medical transportation, and other tasks. The data cited above shed light on the benefit of emergency food to food-insecure families. Via correlation, the tasks served by volunteers in our sites provide the emergency food and assistance that lead to the outcomes being sought.

Also under Healthy Futures, we have many volunteers engaged in companionship and transportation services. These tasks lead to the ability to "Age In Place" and provide significant independence to those served.

RSVP volunteers often serve Veterans. In emergency food services there are often veterans being served as part of a family experiencing food insecurity. Food pantries have records of these demographics to varying degrees. Through our medical transportation program we have an entire sector that deals solely with transportation for Veterans. This effort is funded through the local Veterans Administration and detailed records are kept regarding those services.

To address these many challenges we actively seek local input through our RSVP Advisory Council. This Council is made up of individuals representing many organizations and backgrounds. It is a critical part of the management of the program.

Data collection: Support for assessment and data collection is widespread in our network. Our program staff build community relationships to ensure the performance measures are addressed. To address these many challenges we actively seek local input through our RSVP Advisory Council. This

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Council is made up of individuals representing many organizations and backgrounds. Also, since COAD is made up of 17 Community Action Agencies that cover all the Ohio Appalachian counties we therefore have an established relationship with many people fighting poverty. The staffs of these CCA's work in the community and have a great deal of information about the needs and challenges faced in their communities. It is through these connections and relationships that we approach and select our community partners. Then, with our established community partners, we place volunteers in arenas yielding the highest impact.

We have instruments to collect all data related to the performance measures we have chosen. We use the RSVP Project self-assessment Checklist (RSVP manual Appendix 10, page 5) as a primary indicator of success. This assessment looks at every stage and level of performance and is completed by the RSVP Advisory Council as well as the Volunteer Stations using RSVP volunteers. Almost all volunteer stations have their own assessment measures used on an annual basis. Food pantries, which are affiliated with the Second Harvest Foodbanks of Ohio, collect data on household demographics, impact and other service features. We have access to this data as well, in reviewing the overall impact of RSVP volunteers. In our transportation program for medical assistance we also have supplemental surveys about the clients' satisfaction and perceived benefit from delivered services.

To further ensure that outcomes and outputs are measured, collected and managed, The Senior Programs Director, RSVP Managers and the administrative staff work closely with each site coordinator to ensure proper volunteer assignments are being made and that community needs are being addressed. High quality management of the program is ensured by an experienced administrative team, adherence to COAD policies and procedures, guidelines provided by CNCS and state office, software tracking of volunteers and the awareness of work plans which are reviewed and compared on a regular basis. RSVP staff has an annual retreat to review this data and assess how well volunteers are contributing to the goals of each volunteer station. We also look at volunteer surveys to see how well volunteers are meshing with stations and areas where more training is needed.

We work with each site/station to evaluate the impact our volunteers are having on addressing a critical need and revise assignment plans when necessary. This information is reported on and is the basis for performance measurement of the overall goals we have stated in our work plan. We use several tracking devices to collect and analyze this information on volunteer performance and impact. We use a cloud based program (Volgistics) to collect key demographic information on volunteers and

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their assignments. We utilize this program to record the number of clients served and services received at the site, along with comments and suggestions. Where feasible the CNCS-recommended survey tools will be utilized to assess impact on clients and volunteers.

### **Recruitment and Development**

Our infrastructure for recruiting and retention is well developed after 40 years of operating Senior Corps programs. We have excellent site stations which are evaluated every year to make sure they provide quality supervision, training and assignments. Through our extensive volunteer application process we ensure that prospects are matched with an organization that meets their desire to serve, their individual talents and experience. Beyond the application we interview prospective volunteers to make sure they are qualified to be RSVP volunteers, and that their placement is successful. For example, teachers do not always want to volunteer at schools once they retire, but their skills are appropriate for a number of other settings such as adult literacy, safety training at a food pantry or other placements.

We also evaluate the satisfaction of volunteers every year. This provides feedback to both RSVP and the volunteer stations. This data is shared at recognition events and in-services. This provides an opportunity for volunteers to share their experiences and make suggestions for improvements. Our infrastructure is well equipped to manage these elements. We have experienced staff, extensive policies and guidelines, centrally located offices, a high public profile, significant technology (computers, laptops, projectors, phones, video equipment, faxes, etc.) and connections to many professional associations that guarantee we can provide volunteers and stations a quality experience.

We recruit volunteers through a variety of methods. We utilize local media such as newspapers, radio and television to solicit volunteers for the program. We also send periodic human interest feature stories to local print media to promote the meaningful community service aspects of being a volunteer. Flyers are distributed at many locations frequented by senior citizens. We collaborate with local foodbanks, food pantries, libraries, city officials and other groups in disseminating information and promotional materials about the program. We work with our existing volunteers, teaching techniques of Word of Mouth Marketing and asking that they talk to friends and neighbors about the program. We hold focus groups to assess what elements of the program first attracted our existing members.

In our initial interviews we also provide education about the challenges faced in each community and how RSVP, along with its site stations, works to alleviate problems. Again, our relationship with a vast network of Community Action Agencies gives us many more resources to train volunteers about the

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sources of problems (food insecurity as an example) and the ways each community works to combat those problems. Our Advisory Council has assessed the many challenges that exist in each county and this is shared with prospective volunteers. They are also trained upon placement at their site station.

We review this orientation process from each site station on a regular basis.

We build public awareness in a number of ways. We use newspapers, internet, emails, radio/tv outlets in rural Ohio. Media are constantly seeking stories for publication. In many instances they allow you to write the story, submit photos and provide contact information. They reserve the right to edit and modify as seen fit, but this greatly increases the chances of being included in local editions. After articles appear in local papers we often see an enormous spike in calls in interest in volunteering. We also actively use our website, social networking, email campaigns and numerous other outreach methods.

We make sure a diverse cross-section of seniors are brought into RSVP by reviewing all our recruiting tools and seeing that they show examples of a range of participants, have language that invites everyone to participate and making sure that all our sites have accessible facilities and understand the accommodation of volunteers with special needs. We mobilize community resources and develop the capacity of local organizations through a number of efforts. With COAD staff representing over 100 years of Senior Corps experience we can have coordinators travel to other regions and provide technical support and assistance to our sites, with in-services and other activities.

COAD also provides many opportunities for staff, volunteers and employees at our partner agencies by taking advantage of professional development seminars, trends in management, computer skills and many other topics offered via our Leadership Training Division, at our annual conference and through regional seminars. Volunteer station/site supervisors are provided training on the rules and regulations of the program by the Area Program Coordinators. They are also invited to attend educational in-service programs provide by us for our volunteers. We show off the successes and seek to broaden awareness of our programs through articles in local papers highlighting the achievements of volunteers. We also include their successes in a newsletter to various constituents (elected officials, business owners, other community leaders) and newsletters for schools and other participating site stations. At the annual event volunteers receive special awards for 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 years of service to the program. These recognition events provide validation for the volunteer's hard work and efforts, and also a springboard to other community involvement. In assisting with volunteer retention we provide an in-service schedule at the beginning of each year that focuses on topics based on ideas from the sites and stations.

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Diversity: The demographics of our region are fairly narrow. Less than 8% of the population were non-white (for most counties) during the last census. Despite this fairly homogenous composition, we do reach out to various populations through diverse materials. We also find that even though men are not a minority in our population, we have fewer men engaged in volunteering and we need special efforts to reach men via marketing. Also, since we have Veterans represented in our region (and several RSVP efforts work solely with veterans) we make sure to reach out with language that encourages service members as well as seeking organizations that work heavily with veterans. Additionally, we seek a diverse pool of volunteers by using our relationship to Community Action Agencies to advertise throughout these counties (among low income individuals, minorities and women). These community action agencies see a wide range of people seeking help with utilities, weatherization, job training, emergency food and many of their clients see information about RSVP and volunteering options. We annually review all our recruitment materials to verify they show representation among all populations in our region (gender, ethnicity, educational background, people with disabilities). We use all existing media (newspapers, radio and internet) to reach out to any population wanting to participate in volunteer activities. We make sure all materials encourage those with disabilities to consider participating. We do this through images and referencing our accessibility, adaptability and accommodation plans both in hard copy and on-line versions.

We also seek community volunteers to help with the recruitment, training and support. We recognize the outstanding efforts of our volunteers in planned events held annually. There is a major recognition held in the fall of each year. This event includes a luncheon, door prizes for volunteers and entertainment. We seek to have local elected officials, community supporters and civic leaders attend and share their appreciation for the volunteers' efforts. Throughout the rest of the year we have articles in local papers highlighting the achievements of RSVP volunteers. We also included their successes in newsletters for schools and other participating volunteer stations. We now also use social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc) to promote and acknowledge the work and dedication of RSVP volunteers.

In assisting with volunteer retention we provide in-services that focus on topics based on ideas from the sites and stations. Volunteer station staff is encouraged to attend these trainings and are also invited to other trainings made available through COAD's broader network. Topics include disaster preparation, childhood development, literacy theory and practices, stress management, financial literacy techniques, computer skills and numerous other skill sets. At every event, volunteers are encouraged to share their insights and experience. A wide variety of professionals volunteer their time

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to act as instructors and speakers at these trainings. In addition, volunteers receive additional specialized training at their respective sites and stations. These trainings are focused many times on the specific needs of the particular site or station. Even though RSVP volunteers are not required to have monthly in-services, we provide volunteers informational presentations quarterly. Each RSVP Coordinator meets regularly with station personnel to provide guidance and technical assistance on volunteer management related issues. Efforts will continue to be made which provide opportunities for meaningful experiences for senior volunteers who utilize their individual skills and talents. RSVP plans and documents the recruitment and placement of volunteers in programs that emphasize particular service needs categories, focusing critically on the priority program areas of engaging baby boomers, serving children, mobilizing more volunteers, providing support to frail seniors, and engaging students in their communities through intergenerational service learning programs. We ensure orientation and training sessions are conducted for volunteers at the beginning of their RSVP career, at the beginning of each new service project, and at least annually throughout each year. In order to develop the potential of each volunteer, a thorough assessment of the volunteer's interests and skills is conducted at the beginning of service, through the Volunteer Interest Profile. The profile is reviewed at least every three years of the volunteer's continued service, to ensure that the volunteers are placed in areas that match their personal interests, skills, and experiences. A new, capacity-building benefit to COAD will be the ability to use volunteers as part of our internal business operations. RSVP volunteers can assist with marketing and recruiting for all the Senior Programs we manage. They can also assist us in seeking volunteers from Ohio University, Kent State, Hocking College, Shawnee State and other venues for higher education. These volunteers can help us increase the effectiveness of our technology, marketing, infrastructure and other business aspects.

### **Program Management**

COAD will use the existing expertise of RSVP staff to assist with recruitment, training, management and evaluation. Augmenting this expertise would be the COAD staff in Athens. Given the many years of operating FGP and SCP programs we feel we can use the strategies gained from our successes to help build a strong RSVP program.

The key measure to ensure proper management of volunteer stations is the Memorandum of Understanding. The MOU (see below) details regulations and prohibited activities and allows us to set the standards expected of both parties. RSVP staff sits down with site station staff and reviews this agreement and other expectations on a regular basis. Copies of the RSVP manual are also shared with these organizations. Regular contacts and annual evaluations are the best method of assuring all

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expectations are being met and documented.

MOU excerpt:

### RSVP Responsibilities

1. Recruit, interview, and enroll RSVP volunteers and refer volunteers to the volunteer station. 2. Instruct RSVP volunteers in proper use of monthly reports, reimbursement guidance, and program procedures. 3. Provide RSVP orientation to volunteer station staff prior to placement of volunteers, and at other times, as the need arises. 4. Develop publicity for RSVP such as radio, TV, print or verbal presentations highlighting volunteers, service, accomplishments, and impact on the community. 5. Furnish accident, personal liability, and excess automobile insurance coverage as required by program policies. Insurance is secondary coverage and is not primary insurance. 6. Periodically monitor volunteer activities at volunteer station to assess and/or discuss needs of volunteers and volunteer station. 7. Reimburse RSVP volunteers for transportation cost between their home and volunteer station in accordance with RSVP policies and availability of funds. 8. Provide RSVP volunteers with assignment-related mileage cost reimbursements in accordance with RSVP policies and availability of funds.

### A. Volunteer Station Responsibilities

1. Implement orientation, in-service instruction, or special training of volunteers. 2. Interview and make final decision on assignment of volunteers. 3. Furnish volunteers with all materials necessary for work assignment. 4. For impact-based assignments, complete the appended Programming for Impact Addendum to assess volunteer impact on community needs. 5. Provide supervision of volunteers on assignments. 6. Provide for adequate safety of volunteers. 7. Collect and validate appropriate volunteer reports for submission to RSVP office on a monthly basis. 8. Investigate and report any accidents and injuries involving RSVP volunteers immediately to the RSVP office. All reports will be submitted in writing. 9. If meals are provided to volunteers, please complete this portion:

( ) Contributed meals are FEDERALLY FUNDED under:

Title III of the Older Americans Act

Other (federal) funding source

Contributed meals are NOT provided by FEDERAL FUNDS.

NOTE: The value of free or reduced-price meals which is not provided by federal funds will be verified by the Volunteer Station Supervisor and reported monthly to the RSVP project. This documents important in-kind support for RSVP.

B. Other provisions:

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1. Separation from Volunteer Service: The volunteer station may request the removal of an RSVP volunteer at any time. The RSVP volunteer may withdraw from service at the Volunteer Station or from RSVP at any time. Discussion of individual separations will occur among RSVP staff, Volunteer Station staff, and the volunteer to clarify the reasons, resolve conflicts, or take remedial action, including placement with another Volunteer Station.
2. Letters of Agreement: When in-home assignments of volunteers are made, a letter of agreement will be signed by the parties involved. The document will authorize volunteer service in the home and identify specific volunteer activities, periods, and conditions of service.
3. Religious Activities: The Volunteer Station will not request or assign RSVP volunteers to conduct or engage in religious, sectarian, or political activities.
4. Displacement of Employees: The Volunteer Station will not assign RSVP volunteers to any assignment which would displace employed workers or impair existing contracts for services.
5. Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodation: The Volunteer Station will maintain the programs and activities to which RSVP volunteers are assigned accessible to persons with disabilities (including mobility, hearing, vision, mental, and cognitive impairments or addictions and diseases) and/or limited English language proficiency and provide reasonable accommodation to allow persons with disabilities to participate in programs and activities
6. Prohibition of Discrimination: The Volunteer Station will not discriminate against RSVP volunteers or in the operation of its program on the basis of race; color; national origin, including limited English proficiency; sex; age; political affiliation; religion; or on the basis of disability, if the volunteer is a qualified individual with a disability.
7. Specify, either by written information or verbally, that RSVP volunteers are participants in the Volunteer Station's program in all publicity featuring such volunteers, whether it be radio, TV, print or verbal presentation. Display an RSVP placard where it may be viewed by the public.
8. For impact-based assignments, supply data measuring volunteer impact on community needs to RSVP.
9. Conditions of this Memorandum of Understanding may be amended or terminated in writing at any time at the request of either party. It will be reviewed every three years to permit needed changes.
10. This Memorandum of Understanding contains all the terms and conditions agreed upon by the contracting parties. No other understanding, oral or otherwise, shall be deemed to exist or to bind any of the parties hereto.

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11. This Memorandum of Understanding will be in effect upon dated signature of the Volunteer Station's Representative and the RSVP Project Manager.

12. Financial support of the Senior Corps project is not a precondition for the station to obtain volunteer service, and grant funds are not to be used to finance labor or anti-labor organizations or related activity as required by regulation 45 CFR 2552.121(a)-(g).

13. Safety Surveys will be performed by all new RSVP site stations before volunteers will be placed at that site. Thereafter the Safety Surveys will be done annually, prior to the end of the program year. The service you give as a volunteer will make an important contribution to our community. Thank you for choosing to join RSVP.

Beyond the MOU with each station there is an annual timeline to show what activities will occur at various times during each calendar year. These activities include file reviews, data reviews, annual evaluations and other tasks.

Responsibility (in part) to see that volunteers are performing appropriate activities falls to the volunteer. We manage this aspect of programming by having a quality and thorough volunteer handbook that spells out all allowable activities and other details. The site station has a copy of this manual and all RSVP staff are fully trained in the rules and obligations found in the handbook. Below shows the Table of Contents for the 2013 version of the RSVP Handbook:

Table of Contents: 1. What is RSVP? 2. Benefits of Volunteering 3. Eligibility to be a volunteer- Equal opportunity 4. Orientation 5. Assignment descriptions 6. Timesheets and mileage reimbursement 7. Standards of conduct/confidentiality 8. Changing Volunteer Assignment 10. Active and Inactive volunteers 11. In-services 12. Recognition APPENDIX 13. Staff contact information, whistle blower policy, grievance policies and procedures, safety policies

Our plan and infrastructure to oversee volunteer stations includes regular calls to check on volunteers and their activities, annual evaluations of volunteer and station performance, in-services, providing stations with access to the RSVP website and resource library, monthly time sheets, reading the newsletters provided by many volunteer stations, and periodic emails to stations regarding policy updates or news within the RSVP network. We also cultivate a positive and open relationship with station staff so they feel comfortable calling for advice or guidance when it comes to managing volunteers.

We work to meet changing community needs through our network of members and partners. COAD

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is made up of 17 Community Action Agencies that cover all the Ohio Appalachian counties and therefore has an established relationship with many other organizations. The staffs of these CCA's work in the community and have a great deal of information about the changing needs and challenges faced in their communities. It is through these connections and relationships that we approach our annual planning and assessment. We also use this network to assist with the selection of site stations and volunteer placements.

We know these organizations will provide meaningful assignments and will have accountability to RSVP for the results. The Senior Programs Director, RSVP Managers and the administrative staff work closely with each site coordinator to ensure proper volunteer assignments are being made and that community needs are being addressed. High quality management of the program is ensured by several factors; the experience of the staff totaling over 68 years, the policies and procedures (as developed and used at COAD), the guidelines provided by the CNCS and state office, software tracking of volunteers (via Volgistics and other access based software) and the awareness of work plans which are reviewed and compared on a regular basis.

We work with each station to evaluate the impact our volunteers are having on addressing a critical need at the site, and revise assignment plans for volunteers when necessary. This information is reported on and is the basis for performance measurement of the overall goals we have stated in our work plan. When necessary, staff meet with volunteers and site stations to change volunteer assignments. Site stations may be moved to „general community volunteer“ status from Focus Area if this step is indicated.

We use several tracking devices to collect and analyze this information on volunteer performance and impact. We use a Microsoft Access Program to collect key demographical information on volunteers and their assignments. We utilize a computerized data collection program to record the number of clients we serve and services they are engaged in at the site. We require all site stations to give us annual progress reports on those served by our volunteers. This evaluation includes a written assessment as well as site/station visits to discuss the program and the impact it is having on the community.

We also conduct annual evaluations with each station and each volunteer to assess their views concerning the program's effectiveness. The goal of these assessments is to provide to the COAD staff ideas for continuous program improvement. We also utilize this evaluation process to guarantee that site stations and volunteers are adhering to program rules and regulations.

We feel we have an excellent track record in the management of financial resources for the program.

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We work closely with the COAD Finance Department to record all financial transactions and monitor expenditures in the RSVP budget. Expenditures are monitored monthly through operational statements and volunteer transportation costs are monitored every two weeks to guarantee that financial resources are available to continue the program's operation. The COAD finance department uses the latest software and accounting methods to stay current on expenses and revenues in all COAD programs. With an annual budget of over \$13,000,000, COAD is highly skilled at providing transparent, accountable record keeping. We generate and track significant in-kind donations in the communities we serve. We also solicit local support from a variety of community groups to provide free or low cost transportation to the volunteers, health groups to assist with providing support for volunteer physicals and many local groups who assist us with a variety of non-federal in-kind donations to the program.

Our track record with our Primary Focus area includes years of collaboration with food pantries, foodbanks, soup kitchens and other facilities. As previously referenced, we are part of a network of Community Action Agencies, many that operate emergency feeding or nutrition programs. Having helped many of these sites establish measurements for outcomes we are in a good position to support the impact that we seek to obtain through our volunteers and their placements. The Hocking Athens Perry Community Action Agency (a member of COAD) operates the regional foodbank out of Logan Ohio. We have an on-going relationship in supporting their measurement of impact as well as other food security data for our region.

We have operated RSVP for over 5 years and continue to maintain Advisory Councils for each grant. These groups meet every other month and have minutes, agendas and surveys as part of their regular process. We receive copies of these documents, can see how they are operating and can respond to the issues they are addressing during the course of each year.

Our protocol of reviewing all RSVP documents (Senior Programs Director does this task) in January of each year helps assure that in-kind is maintained appropriately, that MOU's are up to date and contain all necessary language and that all volunteers have emergency forms, applications with all needed information and anything else pertaining to their service. These reviews are written and filed with each program.

### **Organizational Capability**

COAD's long term experience operating the FGP and SCP Programs demonstrates our ability and experience in providing volunteer programming in non-profit agencies for children and youth and, the ability to launch/manage an intergenerational project of this scope, the experience in screening,

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training and managing volunteers. We have the experience in monitoring/overseeing or providing technical assistance to the multi-county region and the capacity to collect and use data to manage projects and measure results. Also, since we have been operating RSVP for 5 years we have gained a significant measure of experience in the recruitment, training, retention and evaluation of RSVP volunteers.

The greatest assurance of compliance with oversight of RSVP activities and fiscal duties comes from the structure of COAD. We adhere to accepted Standards of Excellence among non-profits (as established by the Ohio Association of Non-profit Organizations). Those standards may be found in: <http://www.oano.org/6-standards.htm> and COAD adheres to every aspect of the standards. The categories for those standards are: Mission and Program, Governing Board, Conflict of Interest, Human Resources, Financial and Legal Accountability, Public Accountability, Fundraising, Public Policy and Public Affairs.

On various compliance visits by CNCS we have received praise for the structure and processes within our fiscal department. There are numerous checks and double checks to assure that all funds are expended in an appropriate, allowable and reasonable fashion. COAD also has over 9 other federal grants and has regularly received commendations for our accountability, management and transparency of operations. CNCS guidelines as well as OMB regulations are kept on file and reviewed with all Senior Corps staff on a semi-annual basis to assure compliance.

Staff: We have clearly defined staff positions and roles are also spelled out in great detail. Those responsible for managing RSVP are: Gary Goosman, COAD Senior Program Division Director has extensive experience in working in social services. He currently serves as the President and Legislative Chairman for the National Senior Corps Association (NSCA) and President of the Ohio Association for FGP/SCP Directors. He was the Foodbank Director in Cincinnati, Ohio for 10 years, served as Principal of a small, private school and has years of non-profit Board experience related to fundraising, program evaluation, strategic planning, financial management and other necessary skills. He is a frequent presenter at regional and national conferences related to Senior Corps and National Service.

Susan Rogers, from Jackson, Ohio, is Manager of RSVP (Gallia, Jackson, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Lawrence Counties). Rogers serves on the Ohio Kiwanis District Foundation of Medina as well as a member of the Ohio Community Service Council. "Susan brings a consistent wealth of skills, attributes and proven leadership to her role," said Kitty Burcsu, former OCSC Executive Director. Susan has served as Director of RSVP for 15 years and held the role of President of the Ohio RSVP

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Directors Association. Manager Mary Lewis oversees RSVP for Athens, Vinton, Meigs and Hocking Counties and has more than 30 years of experience with RSVP. The two managers are responsible for oversight of every aspect of their respective RSVP areas, from volunteer recruitment and retention to program oversight, finances and meeting standards. They report directly to the Senior Programs Director. Additional staff coordinating volunteer activities are Sandy Shirey (former Director of Athens Red Cross) and Cher Bellar. Each has over 10 years of experience managing volunteers.

Financial Management: The financial management of the project will be accomplished in cooperation with COAD's Finance Department. Additional operational support will come from COAD's administrative staff. All original program records and files will be housed at the offices of the area coordinators. Copies of all pertinent information are kept at COAD's central office in Athens, Ohio. All confidential information pertaining to program records will be secured in locked file cabinets. COAD's finance department has over 85 years of accounting experience between the 5 staff members. We use MIP software for tracking 4 major contracts and the transactions with our Early Care and Education Division, over 10 contracts within our Community Development Division and the 2 Federal Senior Corps contracts (going into our 35th year of participation in these programs). Within COAD there are established policies and procedures for the purchase of all supplies and equipment. All vouchers are reviewed and approved by both the Director of Finance and the Division Directors. Any purchases over \$1,000 must be approved by the Executive Director. Also, COAD provides direct cash match to the program to maintain adequate facilities and equipment for the program. Each staff member at COAD has an established job description that is reviewed and updated periodically. COAD also has a senior level management staff as well as a fiscal department and administrative staff.

Each staff person's role is clearly defined and support is available to them for management of personnel. COAD directors annually evaluate each employee. To ensure accomplishment of program objectives, employees establish definable goals beyond the day to day operations of their positions. These goals are established with the individual's supervisor with the intention of continuous improvement of the staff person and the program. In addition, each program division at COAD annually develops a comprehensive list of goals and objectives. Using the Strategic Triangle model, developed by the Harvard School of Business, programs set internal and external goals and gauge the accomplishment of the goals through a system known as a 'balanced score card'.

Given the maturity of COAD (over 40 years of operation of a multi-million dollar agency) and the large number of other federal and state grants we manage we have developed very detailed systems to manage purchasing, facilities, supplies, in-kind, management support and other mechanisms. COAD

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has detailed policies and procedures for all aspects of operations. We have personnel policies that are reviewed every year by Administrative staff and our Board of Directors. Roles are clearly defined and lines of communication are spelled out in great detail for all programs.

### **Other**

The staff at COAD and its detailed policies provide two solid reasons why COAD will manage an RSVP program at the highest level of efficiency and impact. This expertise is clearly codified through COAD's adherence to the "Standards of Excellence" guidelines from the Ohio Association of Non-profit Organizations (OANO) for more than 7 years. The Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organizations was formally incorporated in 1994 in response to the needs of Ohio's nonprofit sector. Since then, OANO has served as a voice for nonprofits in public arenas; as a conduit of information about public policy issues that affect the nonprofit sector; as a resource for training and technical assistance; and as a source for affordable products and services. Ohio's nonprofit sector is committed to public service. Hard at work in communities across the state, nonprofit organizations are serving and meeting the needs of our citizens and strengthening our communities. Taken from the OANO website, "The Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organizations (OANO) is committed to bolstering public confidence in and support for the nonprofit sector through the Standards for Excellence which promote ethical practices and accountability in nonprofit organizations across the state".

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

N/A