

Narratives

Executive Summary

An estimated 80 RSVP volunteers will serve. Some of their service activities will include Assisting in Early childhood education classrooms, Creating disaster kits, planning a blood drive, and Assisting with the VITA program. The primary focus area of this program is Healthy Futures. RSVP volunteers will volunteer with food delivery, transportation, companionship, food distribution, food collection, food pantry support, educating, and developing and distributing materials. At the end of the three-year grant, students will demonstrate gains in school readiness in terms of literacy skills. The number of homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities will report having increased social/ perceived social support. The number of individuals will report increased food security of themselves and their children (household food security) as a result of CNCS-Supported services. The CNCS federal investment of \$35,519 will be supplemented by \$18,661.

Strengthening Communities

RSVP of Evansville serves Vanderburgh County which has a total population estimate of 179,703. (Source U.S. Census Bureau: State and County 2010). Evansville is the third-largest city in the State of Indiana and the largest city in Southern, Indiana. (US Gazetteer files 2010-United States Census Bureau 2010) The age distribution of the population is: 6.5% persons under age 5, 22.2% persons under age 18, and 14.4% persons over age 65. The race distribution in 2010 in Vanderburgh County is 86.2% White, 9.1% African American, 2.2% Hispanic, 0.2% Native American, 1.1% Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, and 2.3% from two or more races. Evansville, Vanderburgh County has an above state average of individuals over age 65 at 14.4%, compared to 12.4% nationwide. The economic status of our service area is signified by the median household income of 42,396 which is lower than the state amount of \$47,697. Out of the total population, 29% of those under the age of 18 and 9.8% of those 65 and older are living below the poverty line (US Census Bureau 2010). Carver Community Organization has been in the community since 1944 and has strong ties in the community including representation on many coalitions and boards throughout the community. We are also one of 36 United Way agencies and work closely with them on fulfilling community needs. We have had the RSVP program for over 5 years now and feel we do a great job of matching the skills of our RSVP volunteers with critical needs in our community.

We have selected the CNCS focus area of Healthy Futures.

Narratives

There is a continued need for food distribution for families in Vanderburgh County. RSVP volunteers will work in 5 food pantries across Vanderburgh County collecting food, stocking the shelves and helping clients as needed. In Vanderburgh County, 16 percent of the population have food insecurity which is above the Indiana average of 15.7 percent and the national average rate of 15.9 percent. In Vanderburgh County 25.2 percent of people live below the poverty level while the average in Indiana is 18.7% according to citydata.com.

There are additional risk factors associated with poverty, food insecure and low-income people are especially vulnerable to obesity. More specifically, obesity among food insecure people, as well as among low-income people, occurs in part because they are subject to the same influences as other Americans (e.g., more sedentary lifestyles, increased portion sizes), but also because they face unique challenges in adopting healthful behaviors. Those who are eating less or skipping meals to stretch food budgets may overeat when they receive food, resulting in chronic ups and downs in food intake that can contribute to weight gain and obesity. Food deprivation also can lead to an unhealthy obsession with food and metabolic changes that promote fat storage which becomes even more of a problem when combined with overeating. This overeating and then starving themselves is a problem for low-income parents, particularly mothers, who often restrict their food intake and sacrifice their own nutrition in order to ensure their children have enough to eat. It is so important to have enough food banks operating with enough food so that those who need it are able to receive supplemental food. Many food insecure individuals do not qualify for federal nutrition programs and must rely on charitable food assistance.

We propose to have service activities related to Aging in Place, Access to Care and Obesity and food. We plan to have 64 unduplicated volunteers in work plans addressing these issues, which is 80% of our volunteer base. Volunteers regularly volunteer at 6 area food pantries including Tri-State Food Bank, Zion Food Pantry, Harvest Time, Lincoln Nutrition, St. Vincent DePaul, and United Caring Shelter helping those in need by collecting food, stocking the shelves, and putting the bags together for the clients.

We will be partnering with United Way of Southwestern Indiana to do a Day of Caring Food Drive. We will have 40 or more RSVP volunteers out that day collecting food items, and stocking shelves. We will continue to partner with more food banks over the 3 year grant period and will be in at least 8 food banks in Vanderburgh County.

Narratives

In Evansville 14.4 percent of people are age 65 or older. The cost of keeping a senior in home vs. them going into a nursing home or healthcare facility is a huge difference. Many seniors are choosing to remain at home as long as possible, however many need help with transportation. We will have at least 10 volunteers that will provide transportation to homebound seniors to doctor appointments, grocery stores, to run other errands, as well as be a companion through Gentiva Hospice. Of those 31 senior residents in Evansville, Indiana that receive services 18 of them will report increased social ties or perceived social support. Our main focus in the Healthy Futures focus area will be to provide food to low income families to help them achieve a higher level of food security.

Carver has selected community partners by identifying the needs of the community, our capacity to meet program outcomes and the capacity to recruit volunteers. We have partnered with the American Red Cross to host a blood drive for MLK, Jr. Day of Service. The American Red Cross must collect at least 700 units a week to meet the need for our hospital patients in nineteen hospitals in southwestern Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky. Blood products are vital to surgery, cancer, leukemia, burn, transplant, and accident patients. RSVP volunteers would assist in the process by recruitment and outreach, giving blood, and helping to ensure a comfortable blood giving experience.

We have partnered with the United Way and Carver to help with their early childhood programs to help children who are "high risk" to receive extra help to get prepared for Kindergarten. Locally, considerable disparities in student achievement continue to exist according to race and gender at every grade level. By focusing our efforts on early childhood education we can prepare the children of Evansville to enter school ready to learn and succeed in school. According to the United Way of Southwestern Indiana 2010 Report, 85% of a child's brain develops before the age of five, so it is critical to provide learning opportunities before formal school begins. In Southwestern Indiana, it is estimated that 60% of the students entering Kindergarten receive no formal early learning opportunities. Many of these children start school behind their peers and are unable to catch up. Our RSVP volunteers will regularly read to children and work with early childhood centers to help these students enter kindergarten prepared to succeed.

We partner with United Way on the "Bank on Evansville" and VITA tax programs so our volunteers

Narratives

can help contribute to financial literacy and help seniors and low income people in our community. According to an evaluation conducted by the United Way Financial Stability Partnership on the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Site, elderly and low income individuals need continued assistance in filing their Federal, State, and Local income tax returns (2007). In 2011, 660 Clients were served in Evansville through the VITA program. RSVP volunteers will provide tax preparation and assistance with intake to elderly and low income individuals and families in Evansville. To help with financial literacy RSVP volunteers will recruit and pass out information for "Bank on Evansville". Bank on Evansville was developed to provide families and individuals with access to financial tools and resources for understanding and navigating their finances and budgeting so they many enter the financial mainstream and begin to build assets.

We will hold a Veterans Day Celebration to recognize all of the RSVP volunteers, their family members that are Veterans and anyone in the community who would like to attend. We will partner with other organizations that serve Veterans to make this a very special event for our Veterans. We have done this celebration the last 3 years and each year the event has gotten bigger and has brought more awareness. We will also participate in a Veterans Day parade this November along with Service Learning students from USI. We will have volunteers involved with all aspects of the planning and carrying out the parade. Another way we are volunteering with Veterans will be with homeless veterans and their families that stay at Lucas Place II. Lucas Place II is a transitional shelter for homeless veterans and their families. They have an on-site case manager trained in veteran needs to provide the voluntary supportive services from the menu of services that would be designed with the residents particular needs in mind. Lucas Place II is a supportive environment where veterans learn the methods to maintain an independent and self-sufficient lifestyle throughout their future. The volunteers will work with them on food issues/security.

Recruitment and Development

Evansville-Vanderburgh RSVP project will assure a high quality experience for volunteers by offering a wide variety of opportunities for volunteers to serve where they will be able to have an impact in our community. We offer volunteers opportunities to build new skills through in-service learning activities. Some activities will coincide with the national AARP Experience Corps program, of which Carver Community Organization is an affiliate, training volunteers on how to be good volunteers and do's and don'ts when working with children. The project will also offer quarterly volunteer meetings to build a strong sense of team and purpose, address site specific needs, and further enhance their skills

Narratives

and confidence.

Evansville-Vanderburgh RSVP has built a strong corps by taking full advantage of web-based recruitment systems to post volunteer opportunities. In addition, the Evansville-Vanderburgh RSVP created a recruitment plan that includes advertising, speaking engagements, participation in community/public events, social activities and promoting our program results in the media. We will increase the program's public profile and raise awareness of the growing demand for civic engagement through our campaign efforts. Keeping the community aware of our program and the impact it is making will be key to building awareness and support. A strong screening and selection process has been instrumental in building a corps of volunteers.

The RSVP project will bring together people of diverse backgrounds by offering a variety of volunteer opportunities that will draw individuals with different interests, social economic background, ethnicity, etc. We will focus on recruiting volunteers who participate in some of the community events such as United Way Day of Caring, community MLK Day Celebrations, Lights on After School, and other faith based collaborations. This project will enhance the capacity of organizations and institutions within the service area by building a base of people that are committed and willing to make a difference in the community.

Our volunteer screening process includes a written application, in-person interview, and orientation. It will be the responsibility of the program manager to become familiar with the volunteer's personality, interest, working style, skills and life experiences in order to match volunteers with an appropriate activity. In the field of volunteer management it is a retention best practice to match a volunteer with a position that fits their personality, that the staff knows the volunteer's name, and recognizes them regularly. Volunteers will receive birthday cards, personalized notes of thanks for volunteer referrals, and an annual appreciation where each volunteer will receive a token of appreciation and recognition for donated hours of service. We have a high retention rate as we strive to keep volunteers interested with new and unique opportunities that are both challenging and rewarding.

RSVP will provide training and technical assistance to project staff by budgeting for staff development as Carver does for all its programs. Staff will be required to attend classes and trainings in areas of

Narratives

volunteer management, grant writing and program development. Volunteers will be invited to attend educational and social sessions at Carver Senior Center as well as other agencies in Southwestern Indiana and Evansville. Volunteers assigned to issue areas where they might need additional targeted training such as literacy, tax preparation, or disaster preparedness will be developed and implemented as needed. Also on an as needed basis, RSVP staff will provide training and technical assistance to volunteer station supervisors and community participations groups. We have built strong relationships with our stations and are fortunate that we are able to receive support with stations such as trainings, sharing statistics, opportunities to recognize our RSVP volunteers and support of our programs various projects. We will regularly share statistics and outcomes with our RSVP volunteers to that they can see the impact they are having.

Program Management

The Evansville-Vanderburgh RSVP manages the program with a RSVP Project Manager that has 10 years of experience with coordinating volunteers. She has been the RSVP Manager for almost 5 years now and has been through successful monitoring. visit. She closely monitors her stations by setting up regular visits. She has effective communication skills and makes sure to go carefully through the MOU with the station supervisor so that they are very familiar with the RSVP program and aware of all prohibited activities. She is diligent with safety inspections, ongoing training, monitoring progress of the stations and tracking the impact the volunteers have at each station. The RSVP director will check in with volunteers regularly to make sure they are not only enjoying their placement but also that they are accomplishing the goals that RSVP is setting out to accomplish.

Our plan for the next three years is to focus on the primary focus area of Healthy Futures because that is currently our communities biggest need and that is also the area that we currently have most RSVP's serving. We have served at 5 food pantries and we have build strong relationships with the staff at those stations. We will be able to work closely with them as well as new stations to collect the data needed to report to CNCS. We plan on having additional volunteers serve in the areas of Environmental Stewardship, Disaster Preparedness and Economic Opportunity, and with Veterans.

Volunteers with a financial background will work in our Economic Opportunity focus area. They will prepare tax returns or be "greeters" who schedule the appointments and assists clients by making sure they have the forms completed and the paperwork necessary at the VITA tax sites. Additional volunteers will serve in the Environmental Stewardship focus area. Volunteers will be working with

Narratives

local thrift stores to help keep 4 tons of material out of our landfill. They pick up, accept, process and sell donated goods that would otherwise be thrown away.

This past year our RSVP director went to several conferences and attended sessions on compliance monitoring, programming for impact, using data to effectively tell your story, and using social media to market your program. It is our organization's practice to encourage our directors to attend conferences and trainings to help them be well equipped and knowledgeable in their respective positions. We follow program regulations and monitor our program closely to make sure we are following all policies and procedures. We address identified community needs as outlined in our work plans. United Way provides the most comprehensive needs assessment in the community, thus we are confident as an RSVP sponsor we can provide meaningful placements for our volunteers.

The 2007-2008 Community Needs Assessment is the latest needs assessment conducted here in Evansville and it reflected the following senior related community needs for Southwestern Indiana (includes Vanderburgh, Warrick, Spencer, Gibson and Posey Counties): Families' understanding of finances, budgeting and tax credits; Affordable and accessible health care for low- to moderate-income individuals; Cost of prescription medicine; Affordable and available care for mental health issues; Affordable in-home care for the elderly; Availability of weekend/evening hours for human services.

The Welborn Baptist Foundation Adult Health in the Tri-State 2008 report states that our region is drastically affected by chronic health conditions and related diseases. Among the most significant findings were the high rates of overweight and obesity.

Evaluation is fundamental to the success of any project, whether it is in the planning, start-up, or operating phase. It is a requirement of most of our agency funders and it is a tool for the agency to monitor the activities of our projects. We use two-steps to evaluation: process and outcome. Process evaluation looks at what we did and how well our process of delivering service works. A logic model is created including proposed goals, objectives, and interventions. Outcome evaluation follows process evaluation and goes a step further to look at what happened to people or how people changed because of what we did. Outcome evaluation measures the people based outcomes will be considered at three different stages: short term (changes in knowledge, skills, or attitudes), intermediate (changes in behavior) and long-term (changes in condition or status).

Narratives

With the RSVP project, Carver will assess our performance in the same manner as described and outlined in our work plans. These evaluations will be conducted annually and the results shared with the appropriate RSVP staff personnel. Through partnerships with community agencies and businesses along with, consistent evaluation our program will be strengthened for sustainability and expansion. Carver's affiliation with United Way provides us access to many local not-for-profit agencies in need of the support of RSVP and links us to other resources in the community. On a national level our affiliation with AARP Experience Corps provides us national tools and resources for strengthening our adult volunteer program. Carver will seek support from local media, United Way of Southwestern Indiana, INDOT, Department of Metropolitan Development and grants from foundations that help with program development.

We use Volunteer Reporter software that allows us to stay up to date on our volunteers hours and stations hours. We maintain a database with over 80 volunteers. To recruit our current volunteers for various projects we utilize phone calls, emails and newsletters requesting volunteers. To recruit volunteers for large volunteer projects we use the local radio stations to recruit, talk at various civic groups and ran advertisements in the newspaper. We have a website carverorg.org where anyone who is interested in looking up information on RSVP Evansville can see what is going on and can submit an application. Volunteers can also submit timesheets on-line. We also take advantage of facebook to post many of the projects we're working on and to share our successes.

We have not needed to graduate stations at this time. Because we are a newer grantee our stations and work plans already aligned well with our new work plans for the 2015 grant. We will use the new work plans and outcomes to be able to measure successful outcomes in the Healthy Futures area of Obesity and Food by using a food pantry client survey on food security. In the aging in place priority we will use a client survey to measure social interactions. Once all the data is collected and reviewed we will share the information with the stations as well as the volunteers and change or recruit more volunteers as needed to assure that we reach our goals set in our work plans.

Carver Community Organization has an effective system for managing project resources, both financial and in-kind, to ensure accountability. One staff member collects the receipts, another makes the deposits, and another processes checks and keeps the official records. The Finance Director will

Narratives

create all invoices for the RSVP project. The Executive Director approves all bills and secures two signatures from officers of the Board of Directors. The Finance Director and RSVP Project Manager will keep financial records for the project. QuickBooks is utilized by the Finance Director and forms are created in Microsoft Excel for the RSVP Project Manager. In-kind contributions are tracked through in-kind donation letters and are kept by the RSVP Project Manager and Financial Coordinator who assumes management responsibilities for all resource development and marketing.

We also have developed an RSVP Advisory Council that includes community stakeholders, including representatives from the two Universities, from the Area Agency on Aging, from our board of directors, from the United Way, from our volunteer stations and some RSVP volunteers. All Stations must have a current MOU. We will keep track of that on our MOU tracking Calendar that we will update regularly. All folders will be reviewed quarterly to make sure they have current MOU, up to date job descriptions and current safety inspections.

Organizational Capability

Carver operates Childcare, Youth Programs, Family Services, and Senior Services and an Adult Day Services. Together, these programs serve over 1500 children, adolescents, and seniors through a variety of educational, recreational, social and health programs. Carver is an affiliate of AARP Experience Corps which is a national academic mentoring program that engages people 50 and older. In addition, Carver has had the RSVP grant for five years.

Today, Carver has an annual budget of \$1,361,855 (37% from government sources, 19% from private foundations, and 43% from program service fees and 1% fundraising) with 24 employees. The Board of Directors consists of individuals throughout the Evansville area representing a variety of disciplines and professional affiliations. Fiscal expertise is reflected in the multiple contracts Carver manages, including federal, state, local, and private funding sources. Four staff persons will assume responsibility for the Evansville-Vanderburgh RSVP:

- * The Project Manager
- * Director of Adult Services
- * Finance Director
- * Executive Director

Narratives

The RSVP Project Manager will be responsible for project management, assessment, data management and resource management. The RSVP Project Manager has almost 5 years of experience in this position at Carver Community Org., and has background experience as a Volunteers Coordinator, Resident Services Coordinator, Wellness Coordinator, Social worker and Recreation Therapist which equips her with knowledge and expertise in the recruitment and maintaining of volunteers.

We have a Mastered Degreeed Director of Adult Services with over 17 years of experience in education. She will be responsible for grant/contract compliance, reporting to CNCS, fundraising, and ensuring quality policies and procedures.

The Executive Director has 30 years of experience leading Carver Community Organization and brings experience in relationship building, program management, fundraising, and grant writing and marketing. He will oversee the grant and use his relationship building expertise to help bring awareness to the RSVP program and help build partnerships as well as collaborative efforts to solve community issues.

The Finance Coordinator has been with the agency 15 years, and will be responsible for fiscal reporting, payroll and budgeting for the project.

Fiscal management systems include an annual audit and other financial systems as described in the program management section. Carver receives funding from diverse funding streams including United Way, Adult & Child Food Program, private foundations, corporations, program fees and individuals. All funds received are managed through QuickBooks and funds received are segregated by class and job. The RSVP federal grant dollars will be set up in a separate class of accounts and fully segregated.

The RSVP Project Manager is responsible for collecting all data and entering timesheets into Volunteer Reporter. All timesheets are kept in folders for a minimum of 6 years. Carver sponsors RSVP Evansville which currently has 71 volunteers who assist 26 non profit organizations and the AARP Experience Corps which impacts kindergarten through 3rd graders in the Evansville Vanderburgh

Narratives

School Corp. The volunteer impact is senior-senior and senior-child in both our childcare/youth programs and senior services. We will continue to provide programs that impact seniors and youth in our community as well as provide opportunities for volunteers to deliver services such as; Food Security, blood drives, veterans services, tutoring, healthcare opportunities etc. We will continue to use tools to measure performance of our work plans. We will utilize the new performance measurement tools supplied by CNCS to monitor the outcomes and to measure our performance in all outcome based work plans.

Carver will ensure adequate facilities, equipment, supplies and purchasing procedures, and personnel management support in the following ways: 1) Provide office space and needed technology for the RSVP Project Manager ; 2) financial assistance provided by Finance Manager; 3) well defined job descriptions; 4) Annual performance evaluations 5) weekly meetings with supervisor.

The RSVP Project Manager will attend mandatory Indiana Senior Corps Directors meetings, Southern Cluster Meetings, and grant writing workshops as a part of professional development. Carver has a travel policy in place that the RSVP Project Manager follows. Our policy is that every station and volunteer will be sent a survey instrument rating the overall satisfaction of the program.

Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A