

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

Sponsor: Butte School District #1

The Butte School District #1 will offer opportunities for an estimated 200 RSVP volunteers. These volunteers will assist in continuing to make Butte, Montana the "Richest Hill on Earth."

Our RSVP volunteers will service our community by participating in the following service activities:

**K-12 Educational Success:** Our volunteers will tutor and mentor our students who are not at appropriate grade levels for math and reading. Identified students will work with our volunteers in classrooms and in after-school programs to improve their academic progress. Outcomes will be measured with the tools currently available in the schools. These tools are ISIP progress monitoring (reading), DIBELS progress monitoring (reading) and MAPS (math) as well as the yearly summative assessment for the state for reading and math called "Smarter Balance". We will also track attendance outcomes with the schools with RSVP volunteers.

K-12 Educational Success will be our primary focus area of this project.

**Healthy Futures:** Our volunteers will serve in the area of supporting and assisting our community emergency food bank. This volunteers will be assisting with food distribution, food collection and food pantry support in the warehouse. Outcomes will be measured by the number of individuals that report increased food security and a result of these services of the Butte Emergency Food Bank.

**Healthy Futures:** Our volunteers will work with seniors who are identified as "at risk" due to lack of supportive services. Volunteers will provide the needed services for the identified seniors through food delivery and other support services.

**Economic Opportunity:** Our volunteers assist with VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program) and providing help to individuals who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. These volunteers also provide education and information on tax laws. This service allows for individuals to recoup monies that they might not of done on their own.

Our Butte RSVP project will also collaborate with a diverse group of agencies and organizations throughout the community based on needs and priorities of Butte Silver Bow County. They include St. James Healthcare, Butte Silver Bow Law Enforcement/Neighborhood Watch, Our Lady of the Rockies foundation, nursing homes and assisted living facilities, Butte Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis groups, Butte Silver Bow Archives, the World Museum of Mining and all other appropriate partners.

Our goal for this grant cycle is to develop a variety of opportunities for community service in which individuals may share their experiences, abilities, and skills for the betterment of their community and

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themselves. Butte RSVP will ensure that volunteer assignments are made consistent with the interests and abilities of the volunteer and the needs of the community served.

The CNCS federal investment of \$81,693.00 along with our non-federal match of 30% will support our dedicated and motivated volunteers in Butte, Montana.

### Strengthening Communities

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program is sponsored by the Butte School District #1, our local public school district in Butte, Montana. Butte has a population of 34,200 as of the 2010 census. Our community is called "the city that is a mile high and a mile deep", due to our rich mining background and elevation. The population diversity is as follows: 93% White Non-Hispanic, 3% American Indian, 2.7% Hispanic, two or more races 1.4% and .6% other. The total can be higher than 100% because Hispanic could be counted in other races. Our community lies on a plateau in southwestern Montana. Butte is unique in that it has undergone an industrial impact like no other community. The main industry historically has been heavy metals mining. With the decrease in the local mining industry, the economy is in transition to diversify its employment base, including environmental rehabilitation, retail, technology-based industry and transportation. The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program office is located in historic uptown Butte in the Butte School District #1 Administration Building, 111 N. Montana St. This dynamic program has been serving Butte and Silver Bow county since 1999. According to the most recent Census 28.4% of Butte's population is comprised of senior citizens. Our community is filled with healthy, dedicated, generous and talented seniors. These individuals have great pride and motivation to assist in making our community "The Richest Hill on Earth." These awesome volunteers have provided over 72,000 hours which equates to more than \$1.3 million of services to our city and county.

Our school district is comprised of six elementary schools, 1 middle school and 1 high school. Butte School District #1 is entering its first year of Common Core State testing in reading and math through the Smarter Balance assessments. Although reading and math have shown progress during the past five years, however, there still remains a significant gap in reading and math achievement among disadvantaged students. Moreover, entering into the nation-wide common core assessment brings on new challenges for students and teachers in reading and math.

To increase student achievement in reading, writing and math among all students with special attention to disadvantaged subgroups the Butte School District #1 RSVP project in the primary focus area has set the following goals:

Goal 1: Improve literacy skills among school children of Butte School District #1; build self-esteem;

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and introduce teachers to the benefits of available services of RSVP volunteers.

Objective a: Define reading levels for each student identified for volunteer tutoring or mentoring.

Objective b: Train volunteers to assist low-level readers by demonstrating media-equipment operation and using e-learning curricula to supplement hands-on training.

Objective c: Provide on-going assistance by the RSVP director and teachers.

Objective d: At end of school year, hold a city-wide recognition celebration and honor all participants at an awards dinner.

Objective e: With Butte School District #1, develop computer-based/portable device instruction incorporating the content areas of language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies, focused on reading for comprehension in all content areas.

Outcome: Those who participate regularly will increase their reading levels by a half or one grade level (additional beyond that expected through school) by the end of the year.

Goal 2: Enhance existing school and after-school academic programs and attract additional and regular participation in these programs.

Objective a: Train and educate volunteers about the ROCKIES(Butte schools after school program) and other opportunities that the school district currently has in place.

Objective b: Provide school staff with information about RSVP volunteers and the benefits.

Outcome: By the end of the year, after-school programs served by RSVP volunteers will increase participation by at least 20 percent.

Goal 3: Remove barriers and embarrassment for volunteers who are "technology have-nots" so they can derive benefits from technology such as assisting children with schoolwork, connecting with community resources, research, accessing and using data for informed decision making, and others.

Objective a: Provide basic computer classes to volunteers for digital tablets and computer programs used in the schools through the Adult Basic Education Program in Butte-Silver Bow.

Objective b: Introduce media equipment with "thought starters" on how individuals might use the computers and/or media training to enhance their lives and their interfamily interactions/activities.

Objective c: Provide wireless connection to the Internet and support to volunteers in the schools that the projects are located.

Outcome: Participating schools and volunteers will report on presurveys and postsurveys a greater sense of connection to academic services (e.g., library, government, schools, etc.) and a new value for lifelong learning.

Early intervention must include extra classroom tutoring, after-school and summer-school

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supplemental instruction, particularly geared to increasing literacy skills. Volunteers will ensure that children attend regularly and often, the program should be safe, entertaining, and enriching. Their parents struggle to develop up-to-date work skills or to assist their children with homework. Worse, they are cut off from the flow of information that would enable them to make informed decisions about their and their children's lives, and about school, work, and democracy.

In addition to improving literacy skills, the RSVP volunteers are integral to a larger community-collaborative mentoring initiative that seeks to narrow and close the social and emotional gap that some children suffer. The mentor project will be used in that capacity to reach the "at risk" children and to provide them voices and vehicles for participating in the processes needed to be successful socially, emotionally and academically.

Butte School District #1 RSVP has other collaborations with the Butte Emergency Food Bank, Belmont Senior Center, St. James Healthcare, VITA and Area V Agency on Aging to improve and support healthy and senior independence.

To increase senior independence and healthy living Butte RSVP will be implementing the following goals:

Goal 1: Provide volunteers at the Butte emergency food bank and Area V Agency on Aging to distribute, transport food to individuals in need and offer support services that allow those individual to live independently.

Objective a: Train volunteers or utilize those currently trained volunteers to assist in the food distribution and collection process at those workstations offering this service.

Objective b: Provide on-going assistance by the RSVP director.

Objective d: At end of the grant year, provide the workstation with a survey or data collection tool to report increased food security as a result of the volunteers' actions.

Goal 2: Provide community members with income tax assistance during tax season.

Objective a: Alleviate undue costs of basic tax information and filing for income tax returns, provided by RSVP trained volunteers.

Objective b: Offer VITA with RSVP volunteers in different and multiple locations around the community during tax season for easy travel and convenience.

Butte RSVP also plans and will strengthen collaborations and partnerships utilizing volunteers for community needs and priorities. Our Butte RSVP project will strive to reach diverse needs of the community that can utilize our volunteers and can provide appropriate services.

Some of these activities can include:

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- 1) Assistance with the Butte Archives with filing, setting up exhibits, and front desk help.
- 2) Assisting with Kiwanis Summer Sunshine Camp for kids.
- 3) Working with the Butte Literacy Group to provide adult education classes.
- 4) Providing volunteers to the Butte St. James Healthcare facility for reception work.
- 5) Providing volunteers for the local museums, festivals, and special events. These events can include national service days that involve cooperation with AmeriCorps, Veteran services, and other Senior Corps programs.

### **Recruitment and Development**

The Butte School District #1 RSVP program is comprised of talented, dedicated and motivated individuals. These individuals make our program a vibrant and dynamic volunteer resource to meet our community needs. Our volunteer application process is a very effective tool to assess our school and community needs. All volunteers and staff have a written job description which are discussed and evaluated yearly. This process ensures that our volunteers' experiences, talents, and skills are utilized and they are placed appropriately. The RSVP program and the workstation supervisors provide support and training for volunteers to enhance their skills and enrich their volunteer experience. Throughout the grant year, the RSVP staff arranges for public recognition/education of RSVP volunteers for their services. Informal recognition will be ongoing, birthday cards, card or notes to acknowledge various event in their lives, school volunteers will be randomly recognized by their school principals through "shout outs" or from their teacher partners. Open communication exists between the volunteers and all workstation supervisors on a regular basis. Volunteer leaders have the responsibility to introduce new volunteers and ensure that they are welcomed to the team. The RSVP director will also personally introduce the volunteer to the school workstation and set up a meeting for the initial meeting with the partner teacher. This will ensure that the volunteers feel valued and know that they are making significant and meaningful contributions to our community. Volunteers are often recognized by workstations for their efforts through special awards such as National Volunteer Week, Persons of Distinction, agency/organization "special awards" and other community awards. Our local newspapers and news stations also recognize our volunteers as valued seniors "making a difference" in our community.

The Butte School District #1 RSVP program will work together with workstations to provide necessary training and support. Our program can access training from our state and national offices(CNCS) to enhance the RSVP program. We will also ensure, in our primary focus area, that all volunteers are trained and equipped with materials and information in training before and throughout the school

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year. The school volunteers will be invited to a teacher-support in-service that will give the volunteers an overview and insight of the curriculum and strategies needed for tutoring, mentoring and support in the schools. Furthermore, volunteers will have educational opportunities from various speakers and presentations offered by organizations and agencies at our volunteer gatherings.

Our Butte School District #1 RSVP volunteers and recruits are also encouraged to work in groups of at least two to develop a team concept. This will foster encouragement and support to each other. The RSVP volunteer teams recruit interested seniors to the program and the other organizations/agencies. The volunteers are encouraged to evaluate their experiences and provide suggestions to our RSVP staff/work station supervisors and this is an on-going process. All potential volunteers are interviewed and matched with placements that meet their needs and desires. The RSVP staff will keep volunteers informed of various programs and community trainings through newsletter correspondence.

Volunteer recruitment is an on-going process. Our currently enrolled volunteers are our best recruiters. Other recruitment efforts target individuals such as recent retirees, seasonal visitors and our senior veterans and military families. The RSVP program will incorporate a variety of recruitment methods to continue to tap into Butte's 28.4% of senior citizens 55 and better including: direct face to face communications with prospective volunteers, newspapers and other local media, RSVP newsletters (distributed to all RSVP members, advisory council, school board members and workstations), a website has been designed and will assist in maintaining volunteer participation and will contain information and the application process. In collaboration with local workstations, volunteers will be provided not only with the initial orientation, on-going training but at least 5 social gatherings yearly (such as: Annual Fall Recognition, Christmas Light Tour, St. Patrick's Day Celebration/Spring Fling, an event for National Volunteer week and a Back to School get-together). All of these events are provided to encourage retention and enhance the volunteer experience and collaboration.

The Butte RSVP office will continue to work diligently to recruit a diverse population and hard to reach volunteers in areas. Sensitivity to the various populations(veterans and their families, volunteers with disabilities, race and ethnic minorities) is utilized in this process. Our RSVP project keeps the primary and other focus areas as outlines of our strategic plan and our publications and literature used in recruitment reflect these goals and objectives.

### **Program Management**

The Butte School District #1 RSVP program will collaborate with local schools, agencies, organization and businesses to address specific community needs. The RSVP director/coordinator and Advisory

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Council members are actively involved with many organizations and agencies in our community. Therefore, first hand we know the needs of the community. Also, the program has access and participates in various community needs assessments. Memorandums of Understanding are updated every three years. RSVP staff will contact the station supervisors at least bi-yearly and make a visit yearly. Annual evaluations and assessments will be conducted to assist the program development and planning. Volunteers are informed during their initial interview and orientation the importance of discussing their placement 1.) as it meets their needs and 2.) or if it is not meeting their needs. They need to contact us and we will discuss the issue(s). If necessary, a change may need to be implemented to find another volunteer opportunity. Our Butte School District #1 RSVP project has an open communication with the volunteers, the workstation supervisor and our office staff. The Butte RSVP volunteers are a great resource for the recruitment and assistance with several community festivals and events throughout the year. The events that RSVP assists are: Martin Luther King Day in schools, National Service Day(9/11), the National Festival, Science Mine(Hands-on Science Museum), Freedom Festival and Field of Honor(4th of July), Evel Knievel Days/Festival, and AnRiRA(Butte's Irish Festival). Our volunteers are also apart of National service day events and collaborate with organizations like AmeriCorps and AARP in events such as: Muscular Dystrophy awareness and events, National Volunteer week, Older Americans week, Mayor's Day of National Service and other events.

Butte RSVP utilizes the software program "Volunteer Reporter" to record and track volunteer information and data. We have volunteers who served 3,366.49 hours in our school this past April through June 2014 according to Volunteer Reporter. To date, we are exceeding our volunteer number and hours. For the 2013-14 grant year we are already at 58,909.19 hours served by RSVP members. The impact of our program is available. Volunteer files and information are complete and all inclusive of their volunteer involvement and kept secure in the RSVP office. Volunteer time sheets with each workstation are on file. The keys are held by the RSVP director/coordinator. Our data will track educational improvement in literacy and math in our Butte schools with progress monitoring and standardized assessments, our food distribution and healthy futures data from Butte's Food bank reports, information and logs from Kathy Griffin, Food Bank Director, and their database, the Belmont Senior center's staff and their database, Area V Agency on Aging and their state mandated database and VITA's lead volunteer who will report on numbers of individuals served. This data provides RSVP with the needed impact data and the focus area information for needs assessment. The Butte School District #1 RSVP program has multiple accountability measures put in place. Our

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grant funds have and will be supervised by J.R. Richardson, Director of Business Affairs of Butte School District #1. Beth Sullivan, Grants Bookkeeper, is also of assistance with the RSVP budget and accounting using the CSA account management system to ensure proper documentation and funds management for both federal and non-federal.

The Butte School District #1 RSVP has exceeded the minimum non-federal match in the past years due to outstanding community support. Our RSVP program has many business and individuals who sponsor and contribute regularly throughout the year. The engagement and assistance of RSVP volunteers along with the established RSVP advisory council made up of seven members help sustain this well-established program for the past 15 years.

### **Organizational Capability**

The Butte School District #1 RSVP project began in 1999. The mission of the project is to partner with the schools and community agencies to better K-12 success, senior independence and healthy living since its inception. The goal is to tackle tough issues in our community and enhance senior independence through the volunteer contributions. We thrive to provide opportunities that provide children with tutoring and mentorship as well as provide the community with healthy futures and services through this volunteerism.

Under the organizational structure of the Butte School District #1, RSVP is provided the following: The Butte School District #1 Superintendent of Schools, the Butte School District Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Director of Business Affairs. These will be key stakeholders in this project.

Judy Jonart, Superintendent of Schools, is more than qualified to oversee the project. She has been our superintendent since July 2012. Before the appointment, she served as Director of Curriculum and Instruction and as over 30 years of educational experience. As superintendent, she has the responsibility assessing student performance, evaluating all district programs and developing and implementing the district's professional development. Ms. Jonart's expertise in training programs, evaluation of programs and grant administration serves to enhance the RSVP project in Butte, Montana.

Jim O'Neill, Curriculum and Instruction Director, has been in education for 25 years. He has previously served as a school principal and a teacher. Currently, Jim oversees all curriculum programs, technology and assessment in the Butte School District #1. He also oversees all after-school and summer academic programs. His expertise and knowledge will be an attribute to how the volunteers will assist in the schools.

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JR Richardson, Director of Business Affairs and Clerk of the Butte School District #1 School Board, has been in this position for over 10 years. Mr. Richardson's goal is to insure that the school district derives maximum educational dividends from the prudent expenditures of the school dollars. The Butte School District #1 RSVP project will be staffed by one full-time project director/coordinator. Day to day operations of the grant will be implemented by this individual whom will be responsible for scheduling the training and placement of volunteers, for developing supporting workstations that are implementing primary focus areas and community priorities, recruit and manage program through developing a network of volunteers, work with Butte School district, administrators, and supervisors in placement of volunteers in schools, agencies and organizations, develop and maintain relationships and community support with local businesses and community members, communication with board of directors(School Board), RSVP advisory council and superintendent(RSVP supervisor), and state NCCS office, manage office, equipment and supplies for the RSVP project, collect hours and data needed for grant administration and continually building capacity with volunteers, workstations and school district through review and assessment of program. This person is not yet hired. The Butte School District #1 will make every effort to recruit a qualified individual for the project director/coordinator position and will ensure that the person will work well with the population to be served by the Butte School District #1 RSVP. The Butte School District #1 RSVP director/coordinator will be based in the Butte School District #1 Administration office building at 111 N. Montana, Butte, MT.

The Butte School District #1 RSVP project has many years of experience managing federal grant funds. Our district has utilized the volunteers within our system and plans to continue the school and agency/organization partnerships to the fullest capacity. Since the inception of the program, the volunteer numbers have only increased within our schools and community. Our RSVP program has developed a handbook which is a guide to our volunteers. This handbook incorporates school district and RSVP policies and guidelines. Annually, our program is assessed at all levels.

### Other

Other focus areas addressed:

There is an active Local Emergency Planning Committee and a Disaster Preparedness committee in our school district and community. They are comprised of wide variety of community organizations and agencies. They include: St. James Healthcare, State Highway Patrol, and Departments of Butte Silver Bow. Northwest Energy Co., Schools and others. The Disaster Preparedness committee has the

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following subcommittees: 1) Planning, 2) Pre Disaster Mitigation, 3) Emergency Response, 4) Training/Exercise, 5) Medical Stockpile, 6) Communications, 7) Drought and 8) Public and Gov. Bldg. Security. The planning committee members provide a responsive forum that acts as an all-hazard advisory board to the Butte Silver Bow Chief Executive. Our RSVP program has representation on these committees and are also involved in Neighborhood Watch/Meth Watch programs.

We also continue to provide assistance to our veterans and military families in Butte. We have sent over 700 lbs of personal items, over 500 support letters, over 1000 lbs of candy for our troops, and a banner signed by over 200 RSVP members. We have participated in honoring our service men and women and our program has joined other organizations and programs in the state in this cause. As part of the Rural Veterans Outreach, we plan to collaborate with Job Service in our community and other agencies working to assist our veterans and families to transition back into community life.

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

Not applicable