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Executive Summary

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program of Tulsa, Inc., is a 501C-3 and self-sponsored RSVP project established in Tulsa, OK as one of the 11 pilot projects of RSVP in 1971. We are 100% RSVP focused. Our mission is: RSVP enhances our communities by engaging volunteers age 55 and over, matching their experience, talents and interest to meaningful service. We are governed by a Board of Directors with a maximum of 21 community leaders and an Advisory Council which includes a cross section of agency partners, community representatives and RSVP volunteers. This application is for \$99,447 to support 1050 RSVP volunteers. Our service categories cover all of the CNCS service areas, currently identified on egrants as Education, Healthy Futures, Economic Opportunity, Veterans and Military Families, Environmental Stewardship and Disaster Services. We utilize the work plan format for measuring outcomes which vary according to the area of service.

In our primary focus area of Healthy Futures, as well as the other focus areas, we match the broad based needs of our community with our volunteers to deliver services. These include meal delivery to homebound clients, medical transportation for rural county residents and military veterans, tutors and mentors in public schools and Headstart programs, companionship services to individuals and hospices, outreach to victims of family violence, volunteers building capacity through management assistance and volunteers in the Tulsa court system and local law offices. We utilize surveys, attendance records and data that is available from our local community planning entity plus state and local research studies and initiatives as well as evaluations tools from our agency partners to assess the need for volunteers.

Strengthening Communities

Our 43-year history in Tulsa County has provided us with many opportunities to work with public and non-profit organizations, the United Way, local foundations and corporations. We continue to challenge ourselves to look for needs in the community that can best utilize the skills and interests of our volunteers, balancing impact and flexibility to our volunteers in order to sustain their participation, and even more so with the newer, younger retirees. We are strengthening our various communities by being responsive to their needs and looking for appropriate ways to engage RSVP volunteers in addressing those needs. We are often presented with new opportunities to work with public and non-profit agencies on new programs they are starting in our community. One example of this is our local STEM alliance group (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math). This initiative has

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gained national support and is becoming very entrenched in our communities. They have approached RSVP Tulsa to become their volunteer coordinator, finding them retired professionals in each of these fields to mentor children in our local schools. We are also beginning a TeleCare program to provide companionship and aid to local homebound seniors. This program will be run by seniors for seniors to enable them to continue to live independently in their own homes.

Approximately 16% of individuals in the RSVP Tulsa service area are 65 and older, and the population will continue to grow. To live independent and healthy lives, seniors will continue to require more assistance from organizations. While serving five county areas, each county office is autonomous to design and provide services utilizing senior volunteers as needed in the area. Since we have a mix of rural and urban and also mid-sized towns, staff works with community leaders and organizations to assess and address needs, using a local Advisory Council and networking with local social service agencies. We have promoted the special skills and service of seniors through our RSVP administered programs such as the medical transportation in Creek & Wagoner County, a Senior Angel Tree and holiday gifts in Wagoner & Creek County, mentors and tutors in Elementary and Head Start schools, Airport Ambassadors assisting with veterans and their families, Power Up+ for re-integrating prisoners needing workforce development skills, Court Watch and Grandfriends (the later 2 being PNS grants). The 1999 PNS to establish Court Watch has been established as valued volunteer presence in the Tulsa District court system, as well as a partnering in the Family Safety Center, a one stop resource for victims of domestic violence.

Headstart volunteer, Louis, reads to the children every Friday. He has become such an integral part of the school the children want to know why he isn't there everyday. "Santa" as he is called by a lot of the children is very loved and appreciated by all the children.

All station partners may submit their volunteer requests on line, with a form that outlines the basic of the position. Staff makes additional contact to clarify how the position fits our targeted population. We also scheduled RSVP Roundtable and Networking sessions, quarterly, at our Tulsa office to offer face-to-face time with partner agency staff to build awareness of RSVPs services and how we can develop more effective partnerships. We also have staff meetings every month to give the RSVP staff face-to-face meetings to discuss updates and changes in our programs. Staff also participates in Tulsa Interagency Council, a group that targets entities working with seniors. Tulsa Area United Way also

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provides numerous avenues to share the RSVP story through regular meetings and interaction in trainings and events.

Our Board of Directors and Advisory Council provide contacts with new resources for funding and additional community volunteers. We have become more strategic in our methods of building awareness of RSVP programs in our community. Currently we have a regular full page section in a regional publication that is sent to 70K residents over age 60. This is our most often reference source of new volunteers and agency inquiries. We have an active Facebook page and also send a weekly e-newsletter detailing volunteer opportunities and senior resources to 2,000+ volunteers, a quarterly newsletter distributed to all volunteers and agencies as well as distributed to area senior living centers. In 2014 we launched a new website that has attracted a lot of attention and we are reaching out to the retirement human resources departments in local corporations to insert information about RSVP in their retirement packages to their employees.

We recently developed individual surveys for volunteers and agency partners. The results from these surveys is being used to help implement two volunteer focus groups (ages 55-70 and ages70+). We are working with a marketing professional to develop focus groups. The end result will allow us a better working knowledge of our demographics and how to better reach other volunteers and spread RSVP awareness.

Capacity building is accomplished through regular recruitment and referrals to agency partners, and via free workshops on a variety of business topics hosted by an RSVP volunteer professional in the specific workshop topic field and offered at a local library. Our A-TEAM group also is available to do large size projects either on site (which builds awareness) or at our offices. They are experts and usually get the job completed in half the time that the agency estimates. It is a very positive image of seniors and meets a great time saving need. A-Team volunteers are also urged to connect with an agency to do additional services. The special event pool of RSVP volunteers also integrates seniors into other service programs and can be a stepping stones for them to become more regularly involved with the agency.

In our three county offices, we have upgraded to more visible locations with a street presence, including Creek County where we are part of a six agency Family Resource Center and Washington

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and Wagoner counties are located on major streets with signage. This affords us the opportunity to bring community members in for events and activities, as well as to interact more directly with other agencies needing volunteer assistance. We continue to be called upon to enhance partner agencies by assisting with referrals for their volunteer requests.

What makes RSVP Tulsa so successful is that we are a winning combination of high caliber, highly motivated volunteers; diverse volunteer opportunities; strong working relationships with our agency partners; and the overall friendly culture of RSVP Tulsa.

Recruitment and Development

Building a core group of volunteers, including recruiting, retaining and recognizing senior volunteers is our sole mission. Our philosophy is that every staff person is a recruiter! The Volunteer Coordinator in our Tulsa County office is a full time position, 75% funded by local donations. Her primary duties are recruitment, referral placement with agency partners and sustaining volunteer activity. Director of Programs and other staff focus on program management for special collaborations such Grandfriends, Court Watch, Power UP, VOE as well as web development, recognition, media activities and fundraising. It is important that the county coordinators be a local resident who can network with the various segments of the community and gain the trust and support of the local volunteer pool.

We have a monthly column in a county-wide senior publication in Tulsa and have opportunities for articles in area community newspapers and magazines. County offices use their local newspapers and network with local organizations and chambers of commerce. Each has a separate Advisory Council to also assist in their networking efforts.

Our quarterly newsletters keep volunteers, partner agencies, and other stakeholders aware of new opportunities. These newsletters are sent to even those who are currently inactive so they can become re-activated when ready. Our volunteer handbook outlines suggestions for making the volunteer assignment meaningful and how to change an assignment if needed or to resolve a conflict. The best recruitment tool is a successful RSVP volunteer. Personal referrals are usually very successful.

Targeting the 55-65 age for new volunteers can be difficult. We know that the Boomers are staying in their jobs longer, so we are now targeting large local companies working with their human resources

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department to add RSVP information to their retirement packets distributed to their employees.

Recognition-

As new volunteers join RSVP Tulsa we send them a Welcome card reminding them to check the website and call us with any questions. Each month we send birthday cards to volunteers in each of our counties. Volunteers are frequently spotlighted in our quarterly newsletter as well as our county-specific recognition banquets each year. We present Presidents Lifetime Service awards annually at the recognition banquets and nominate volunteers for city-wide volunteer awards. We annually nominate volunteers for the state-wide Aging Services awards and have had 4 in the last 5 years receive this honor. We have special thank you events for our RSVP-specific programs at the Airport, Grandfriends, the Court volunteers, and Knittin' Kittens. Our drivers and office volunteers have separate recognition activities as well. The staff and office volunteers all gather during December for a potluck lunch and gift exchange. Our weekly e-newsletter also give us the opportunity to hear back from volunteers who are enjoying their placements and services that RSVP provides. This also gives us the opportunity to re-engage volunteers who may have been "off the radar", as the one-time community events provide flexibility in time commitments. Again in our evaluations, the volunteers answer that they feel well-recognized by RSVP.

Training and Assistance

We sponsor RSVP roundtable sessions for agency partners where we assist each agency with volunteer management tips and network with each agency to find out what works best for their specific environment, we also have presented a volunteer management workshop at the Regional Library, and participate in United Way technical trainings for staff and volunteers. Staff also participates in statewide conferences on Volunteerism and Aging Services. As scholarships are available, staff attend trainings in program areas that relate to their duties such as resource development, domestic violence issues, and volunteer management conferences. Free or low-cost special subject webinars are also more readily available on the internet which provides additional, cost-effective staff development opportunities. In addition, we offer seminars at our office on a variety of topics of interests to our volunteers throughout the year.

Program Management

Staff works with our partner agencies in meeting their needs and developing their requests, clarifying any information on the prospective volunteer assignment and how the RSVP volunteer will be

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utilized. Follow up email and phone calls to volunteers and partner agency staff are made as needed. We have started a quarterly partner agency e-newsletter to share senior volunteer management ideas, get agency feedback, and take suggestions on how RSVP can better serve their needs. Staff makes regular visits to our partner agencies as well as inviting agency volunteer coordinators to our office for agency roundtables and one-on-one orientations. Our 2014 program evaluation among active volunteers and stations reaffirmed that our partners value the RSVP service. Over 90% rated them as Excellent or above average. Volunteers serving at their agencies were rated highly (either Excellent or Above Average) in three categories: Experience/Skill, Attitude, Commitment/Reliability. 82% of volunteers indicated volunteering contributed greatly to their emotional and physical well-being.

We recently changed our volunteer management system database to Volunteer Reporter. We have been actively converting from our old Maverick database to this new software. This process will continue to take some time, but will be a wonderful benefit when we get the new database cleaned up and running smoothly.

The board and officers review our financials monthly and we have a Finance Committee led by our elected Treasurer which meets quarterly to address budget issues as needed. The United Way community panel has commended us for our strong fiscal management practices and impact measurement. We have been a grantee of CNCS and the former ACTION since 1971, being one of the original pilot projects. We have had audits every year since becoming our own 501c3 in 1976, and all have been unqualified (clean).

Our Board of Directors and designated staff work together to raise \$209,500, 47% of our 2014 operating budget, from private foundations, individuals, corporations and special events. We use volunteer committees to assist staff in this effort. This included one fundraising event, which grossed over \$59,000. Volunteer leadership provides the largest percentage of our special event planning activities. Strong local support matches the CNCS grant funding from United Way and State Department of Aging. We have an active Board of Directors that functions well with committees and an Advisory Council that works directly with staff on targeted issues and projects. Being a United Way agency affords us access to excellent training opportunities.

Organizational Capability

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We are a self-sponsored 501c3 RSVP project since 1976, in existence since 1971, with a 43 year history of recruiting volunteers and program management. The Executive Director is responsible for staff supervision and development. We meet face-to-face in staff meetings every. Staff participates in Tulsa Association of Volunteers Administrators, attending programs on volunteer management and other related topics. We have a budget line for conferences and staff development and training, including technology applications. We have staff with participating memberships in their local Chambers of Commerce, Association of Women in Communications and Association of Fundraising Professionals. Current staffing remains at 5 full-time and 3 part-time employees serving one main office and 3 satellite offices. We use Quick Books accounting software. The Executive Director has had over 14 years experience in fundraising and works with the federal financial reporting.

Since our inception in 1971, we have passed all CNCS monitoring reviews, plus annual reviews by the State Dept. of Aging Services and the annual United Way allocation process. We have received three PNS grants to develop direct service programs that are still in place. We are proud to have been recognized with a statewide award from the 2010 Oklahoma Center for Non Profits for outstanding programming and fiscal management. Out of 77 nominees, RSVP was a finalist in the ONE Awards Senior Organizations category. An agency had to be nominated by a select committee of statewide foundation trustees and business leaders to even apply. In 2013 we received the Blue Cross Blue Shield Champions of Health Award in the Senior Category. We were nominated for this honor and voted the winner over many entries. Our nomination demonstrated the impact that volunteering in the community has on the physical, mental and emotional health benefit of seniors.

With previously documented revenue information, we feel we have demonstrated a long history of prudent agency management. The Board of Directors supervises the Executive Director to maintain facilities and other organizational needs through a budget review process and regular on-site activities. A board Personnel Committee functions to review all HR policies and updates them as needed. Staff job descriptions are available for review by board members in consultation with the Executive Director. The Board of Directors does an annual evaluation of the Executive Director (Project Director) and other staff evaluations occur annually in December and are done by the Executive Director. Goals for each employee are set at this time. The staff meets monthly throughout the year, rotating to each site to plan and discuss issues of concern or brainstorm program ideas. The Executive

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Director also meets with the three county coordinators on a regular basis and as needed to assist them with individual planning and recruitment ideas. In addition, the Tulsa United Way grant process involves extensive community involvement in assessing our program and funding requests. This brings in others from the community at large to review our operations and financial management.

The Executive Director and the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors meets monthly to go over the agency finances, reviewing for accuracy and budget maintenance. The Executive Director and the Finance Committee meet in the fall of each year (and as needed) to review agency needs and to develop a new annual budget. The Executive Director along with the assistance of the Executive Committee plan and direct the financial and programmatic future of the agency.

Other

We have reviewed the new service categories and analyzed how our current service categories will meld into these strategic priority areas. We have strong presence currently in the Education and Healthy Futures areas. We have grown our relationship with two entities that serve veteran's and are eager to develop new relationships to service that population. As national activities are developed, given the time and information to study and prepare, we would be very open to learning how we can adapt current programs or develop new ones. Going forward we will continue to research ideas for how to engage RSVP volunteers in additional Environmental projects. We have supported Disaster Services primarily through referrals to the local chapter of Red Cross. Most of our volunteers now are in roles that involve their blood services. We can take this opportunity in transition to educate ourselves more about how RSVP volunteers would play a more active role in disaster services.

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/a