

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

### Executive Summary

RSVP of Galveston County (RSVP) has been successfully serving non-profit agencies with recruitment, training, placement and retention of volunteers, age 55 and older, throughout Galveston County (population 306,782) since 2002.

RSVP is sponsored by the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) -- Sealy Center on Aging (SCOA), located in Galveston, TX. SCOA's mission is to improve the health and well being of the elderly, not only within the Houston/Galveston area but also statewide and nationally, through education, research, clinical and social services, community participation and advocacy, and the establishment of cooperative linkages with other geriatric and gerontological centers. The RSVP volunteer program fits well within the SCOA mission as we not only activate/motivate the senior population as volunteers, many of the community non-profit projects are directed toward the aging population of our county. RSVP is fortunate to have SCOA as its sponsor because so much of the research and clinical components of their work provides a unique access to the senior population for volunteer recruitment and educational purposes. Numerous UTMB doctors and staff refer their patients to our program as a way to keep their older patients more socially active, alert and involved in the community. The SCOA department recognizes the value in our RSVP program and provides many methods of support (peer assistance from statisticians, social workers, technical writers) to help us achieve our goals. UTMB as an institution is supportive to RSVP by providing on going training opportunities available to staff and seniors alike. Hiring practices at UTMB promote diversity, allowing staff to work alongside people of many different cultural backgrounds. This enhances multicultural understanding and respect, for the staff, when meeting new and potential RSVP volunteers.

UTMB is requesting \$36,736 to support an estimated 180 RSVP volunteers in the Galveston County area. 100% of the volunteers serve in the Corporation for National & Community Service Focus Areas. RSVP's goal for this grant period is to address projects involving the following Focus Areas and Categories:

Primary Focus Area - Healthy Futures:

1. Aging in Place

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Provide supportive services to seniors in adult day care settings. Activities may include: helping them with activities of daily living, supporting client group activities, facilitating client participation in games, social activities and cognitive development activities, assisting with physical therapy, monitoring clients' safety and well-being, etc.

### **2. Aging in Place**

Per instructions from the Corporation for National & Community Service, RSVP of Galveston County has eliminated congregate meal programs and now supports Meals on Wheels (home delivered meals) only. Activities may include meal delivery and/or capacity building services such as recruiting/registering volunteers for the program, and marketing the program in the community.

### **3. Obesity and Food**

Organize and/or participate in nutrition education, community extension services and information dissemination and service programs such as gleaning surplus produce, food stamps, food banks, programs relating to food preparation, nutrition and diet, school meals programs, co-ops, organizing food drives, and planning an assisting in preparation of a meal.

### **4. Aging in Place**

Participate in the array of health and social services required for individuals needing long term care in the home. This includes peer support, meal preparation and nutrition information, transportation to doctor appointments and grocery store, referral and service coordination, education on senior-focused frauds and scams threatening financial security and casual or friendly visiting in person or by telephone.

### **5. Access to Care**

Provide a learning experience designed to pre-dispose, enable, and reinforce positive voluntary health behaviors for seniors. Activities may include engagement with individuals in-person, by phone, or through a web interface for conducting classes, workshops, and instructional sessions.

Focus Area: Education

### **6. Other Education**

Provide guidance and leadership to at risk and/or gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender children,

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youth and young adults for purpose other than educational success. This also provides our GLBT senior community with a rewarding opportunity to volunteer as mentors and support the experiences of GLBT youth who are dealing with their sexual identity and/or attempting to "come out" to their friends and families.

### Focus Area: Capacity Building

#### 7. Capacity Building

Assist with planning, design and operation of social service programs, proposal writing, fund raising, etc. Identify community needs, organize and work on solving community problems. Provide retired executives, administrators, management specialists and professionals to assist private non-profit and public agencies to expand and improve their operations. Examples include: information on office management, record-keeping, accounting systems, training, training of board of directors and personnel, development of computer systems and programs, etc.

### Focus Area: Veterans and Military Families

#### 8. Veterans and Military Families Served

Collaborations with Veterans Affairs office in Galveston County and the Gulf Coast Center's Veteran Support Services program. RSVP volunteers help the VA office by identifying and referring veterans to their benefits office, helping them in acquiring benefits such as Medicare, Medicaid, food stamp programs, and educational assistance programs. The Gulf Coast Center is supported by announcing their peer support group meetings, recruiting veterans to help volunteer in their programming and providing transportation to meetings.

## Strengthening Communities

Galveston County is located in the upper Texas Gulf Coast, adjacent to Brazoria County on the southwest, Chambers County to the northeast and Harris County to the north. The county covers 399 square miles and is geographically divided between island, mainland and peninsula areas. Island communities are connected to the mainland by a causeway, and a ferry provides access from the island to Bolivar Peninsula. Galveston is the 14th most populous county in Texas, with 13 incorporated communities.

Galveston County residents, in general, have a lower socio-economic status, compared to state or national averages. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 16.8% of Texans live at or under the poverty

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level, and 12.8% of residents in Galveston County live within the same poverty status. Not only residents are feeling the devastation of tough economic times, the non-profits within Galveston County are feeling the economic pinch as well, making volunteerism an even greater need for them to do more with less funding for adequate staffing.

The majority of the population (67%) resides in mainland communities. Galveston Island is home to 32% of the population and the Bolivar Peninsula is home to 1%. Galveston County has 291,309 residents, according to the 2009 US Census Bureau and approximately 11.3% of Galveston County residents are 65 or older. This offers a substantial pool of candidates for the vast number of volunteer opportunities within Galveston County. According to this census, residents represent many ethnic backgrounds including African American, White, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Latino, and multi-racial. Currently within our RSVP volunteers, there are 9 % Hispanic, 2% Asian, 20% African American and 69% white. Our Advisory Council is comprised of 20% Hispanic, 13% African American and 67% white (1 person is disabled and 73% are Baby Boomers). Of the program's advisory council members, 40% live on Galveston Island and the other 60% live in communities spread throughout the mainland in the northern part of Galveston County.

The general health status for Galveston County residents can be described by looking at a few additional health indicators, such as communicable disease rates, birth and chronic disease data. According to the Galveston County Health District, death rates for cardiovascular, homicide, diabetes, cancer and suicide all exceed the state average. Galveston County is a community with many needs and demands for social services which address those stated. These needs will be addressed through RSVP volunteer station project collaborations such as the AIDS Coalition; D'Feet Breast Cancer; St. Vincent's House (addressing multiple health/mental issues previously referred to, serving the indigent community); Gulf Pride for Youth (mentoring and safe havens for bullying and suicide prevention); Pregnancy and Parenting Support Center (focusing on teen pregnancy; mentoring, providing parenting education, car seats and baby supplies); Galveston County Food Bank (provide nutritious food pantry to low income and elderly) and of course, distributing health materials on chronic diseases, available through the Sealy Center on Aging Learning Center (for seniors) and multiple departments/clinics within the RSVP program sponsor's institution, UTMB, as well as certain distribution-based stations such as Meals on Wheels and Galveston County Food Bank. These are a

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few of the entities RSVP of Galveston County currently works with, and seeks to work with in the future.

Our Advisory Council represents different communities within the Galveston County coverage area, as well as varying socio-economic status, gender and ethnicity. The needs are quite different from one community to the other and we charge council members with the responsibility of identifying and reporting these needs. During volunteer recruitment presentations, the program director asks the audience to describe issues or concerns in their community. The same question is posed to Chambers of Commerce in Galveston County cities. This helps to create new projects and enhance existing projects. Annual evaluations are conducted among council members to assess the productivity and effectiveness of our program. Suggestions are made and changes initiated when agreed upon. Council training is provided when needs arise.

The advisory council volunteers call upon their personal and professional contacts to assist RSVP and non-profit agencies in fundraising and volunteer appreciation events (e.g. council member acquired donations from local coffee house -MOD Coffee- for a volunteer station -Libbie's Place- fundraiser). MOD Coffee provides free coffee for volunteer related meetings and offers free meeting space for RSVP volunteer stations; Mosquito Café, Patty Cakes Bakery and Sunflower Bakery provide free baked goods for large volunteer group projects; Moody Methodist Church provides free meeting space and beverages for RSVP needs (including volunteer appreciation luncheon); larger businesses such as Texas DOW Employees Credit Union (TDECU) and Frost Bank offer meeting space and giveaway items for volunteer appreciation events; additional smaller businesses throughout the county (too numerous to mention) support the program/volunteers with gift certificates and items for door prizes at volunteer appreciation luncheons. All contributions are logged and retained for historical and audit purposes.

RSVP has become the "go to" resource for non-profits needing volunteers and for people trying to identify and contact non-profit services. We receive calls regularly about how to find service-based organizations. They come to us because of our reputation, working with a multitude of non-profits and can share that needed contact information. RSVP of Galveston Co. offers non-profits presentations on how to work effectively with volunteers and staff. We help troubleshoot when problematic situations arise with volunteers and seek advice from our representative at the

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Corporation for National & Community Service when needed. RSVP helps provide the volunteer base for non-profits to further serve the community and address important needs.

Partners are selected by the community they serve or do business with, their location/s and the reciprocity there is to be gained. This refers to local businesses, aging-related programs, and civic groups such as Rotary Clubs, Junior Leagues and area colleges. These entities provide financial support, in-kind contributions, and younger volunteers (eg. TX A&M Engineers Without Borders) for multi-generational projects.

Public awareness is built with local businesses catering to potential volunteers (MOD Coffee; McAlister's Deli; Mosquito Café; Patty Cakes Bakery, ShyKatz Deli, Kwik Kar) where we leave RSVP brochures and special announcements. Visibility of the RSVP program is displayed daily on the director's uniform shirt with "RSVP Volunteer Program" embroidered on it. Large magnetic RSVP signs are applied to the program director's car. This spurs regular inquiries and conversations that have resulted in new volunteer recruitment and business support. RSVP places advertising in program booklets for events/fundraisers concerning senior populations (Libbie's Place Adult Day Service fundraising events). Photos of RSVP activities are published in the Galveston County Daily News, the largest newspaper in Galveston County. A few of the RSVP advisory council members were hand-selected due to their social status (a member of one of Galveston's founding families) and influence they have to offer this program. A web-based Facebook page has been established for RSVP of Galveston County and has generated greater awareness of this program. It has proven to be an effective tool for increased volunteer recruitment. This Facebook page has 173 friends who support the program and tracks weekly "visits" to the RSVP page. This particular tool has become very helpful in announcing new projects and soliciting help for them. It is also a good way to reach Baby Boomers.

RSVP seeks to recruit people of all faith and ethnic backgrounds through places of worship (Hispanic churches, mosques, synagogues); by asking our volunteers of different ethnic backgrounds to help recruit and/or provide us with in-roads to recruiting people of similar background and by announcing special projects through posting a need for project volunteers in businesses serving customers of different ethnicities.

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In addition to the numerous ongoing volunteer activities throughout the county, RSVP volunteers are recruited for high-visibility annual community events such as Martin Luther King Day; Veterans Day; and D'Feet Breast Cancer 5k Run/Walk. RSVP volunteers are traditionally seen front and center at these events.

RSVP volunteers help non-profit agencies by performing clerical activities that allow their staff more time to focus on utilizing their professional skills/services for direct services within their agency. Volunteers provide capacity building by performing fundraising activities and promoting recruitment/awareness of organizations they work with. They also build capacity by creating/updating agency brochures, building/maintaining volunteer databases and conducting volunteer recruitment (of all ages). Several "outside" entities are now coming to the RSVP office staff for the purpose of volunteer recruitment for projects and events. Such entities include: City of Galveston; Texas A&M University at Galveston, UTMB student organizations and the Junior League. This allows RSVP volunteers to help provide volunteer stations we work with, with another source of volunteers (in addition to RSVP). It creates and encourages intergenerational volunteering efforts within these volunteer stations.

As mentioned earlier, RSVP seeks community partners to work with. We attempt to create or join intergenerational projects that typically use younger volunteers like UTMB medical students, Texas A&M University students, College of the Mainland and Galveston College students, Master Gardeners and Junior League members. The senior volunteers enjoy working with the younger generation and serve as mentors for their future community endeavors.

### **Recruitment and Development**

We encourage volunteers to explore new experiences or, in certain cases, take on a leadership role (sometimes as a project leader or as a board member). We also utilize the RSVP Advisory Council as a training ground for council members to hone leadership skills.

To show volunteers the importance and outcomes of their efforts, our volunteer photographer put together video footage of various food bank and support services recipients expressing their gratitude for volunteers and how their efforts created a positive change in their life. This video is used in presentations to large community groups to help show the impact a volunteer makes. At the RSVP volunteer recognition events we recognize and celebrate the difference they have made in the lives of

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others. We remind them that their volunteer service makes them a role model for those around them, especially the younger generations. Area businesses are reminded of the importance and impact of volunteerism when they are approached to help celebrate RSVP volunteer efforts by donating a gift of thanks.

RSVP offers personally enriching volunteer experiences. Volunteers are involved in meaningful activities which afford them increased social interaction, increased use of their personal skills, at times working in team settings alongside younger volunteers and opportunities to increase intellectual stimulation. Health education projects teach improved eating habits/lifestyle changes for healthier living. The AIDS Coalition project teaches AIDS awareness and helps dispel myths and discrimination circulated in society. Volunteers learn while participating in health education projects and can apply information to their own lives. When working on food distribution and meal delivery, volunteers often gain a greater understanding and compassion for the populations they serve. All of these "gains" are pointed out to potential volunteers during recruitment. RSVP of Galveston County ensures that volunteer activities are available to people of all cultural and racial background, sexual orientation, skill levels and physical abilities. Discrimination is not tolerated among RSVP staff, volunteers or volunteer stations. We believe that all volunteer experiences enhance lives and attempt to secure that for everyone involved in this program. We try to be aware of RSVP volunteers who live alone or perhaps deal with depression (we get volunteer referrals from social workers working in Geriatric clinics). In these instances we are vigilant in recruiting them for volunteer projects that have a higher socialization component to them. We have had two couples meet through RSVP activities and have since married.

Volunteers are recruited through presentations at senior focused programs (AARP, Sr. Centers, Retiree Associations and various community groups), as well as churches, mosques, synagogues and use of local media advertising (announcing presentations). Current RSVP volunteers and advisory council members are asked to conduct ongoing recruitment efforts as well. We have an RSVP advisory council member who recently retired as manager for a credit union run by a large refinery in our area. This allows access to their employees, their retiree group, and their older community members conducting banking with them. Area non-profits are asked to inform volunteers about the RSVP program to broaden their volunteer experiences through joining activities at other non-profit

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locations. Our advisory council members consider new ways to recruit on an on-going basis, with continued focus on engaging "Baby Boomers". The establishment of a Facebook page for the program has increased community awareness and involvement, specifically within the "boomer" generation. There are currently 173 "friends" of RSVP of Galveston County on Facebook. We are increasing efforts to recruit RSVP volunteers who perform volunteer recruitment (capacity building) for our program and our non-profit stations, or indirectly perform these duties by identifying younger volunteers to take on recruitment activities.

During recruitment and sign-up, RSVP volunteers are interviewed (in person or via phone) about their skills and interests, provided information about current community needs and opportunities, and the program benefits/expectations are discussed. Included in expectations are the requirement of non-discriminatory behavior, confidentiality and the fact that poor behavior may end in termination from their volunteer position. RSVP stresses this to the volunteer stations as well. Once a volunteer selects a specific activity to engage in, they are provided a job description for that effort to help further delineate what is expected of them. The training volunteers receive, specific to their new volunteer assignment, is typically conducted through the agency they are serving. The RSVP director is always available for any individual training or support needs a volunteer (or station) may have. A survey is conducted periodically to secure that RSVP volunteers are satisfied with the projects in which they are engaged. If/when complaints are voiced by volunteers or stations, the program director assists in rectifying the situation. If problems are identified as inherent in the volunteer station, and remedies cannot be established, that station is dropped from the RSVP program affiliation (resulting from Advisory Council consultation). In an effort to recognize and retain our valued volunteers, we offer a volunteer recognition event during the year, with prizes and giveaway items from the numerous businesses and individuals who wish to support and encourage them. Out of respect and gratification for their volunteers, RSVP of Galveston County endeavors to keep them feeling satisfied and appreciated in their volunteer activities. Personal phone calls to volunteers are made randomly throughout the year by the program director or a designated volunteer representative. These calls are intended to help maintain contact with volunteers, suggest new opportunities they might like and just check on them in general as a friend.

The program sponsor, UTMB, provides frequent helpful management-based training opportunities (for staff) during the lunch hour. The RSVP director (and the only RSVP staff) has attended training

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topics such as: effective management; negativity in the workplace; discovering yourself; anger management; maintaining confidentiality (HIPAA); effective marketing; and diversity in the workplace. There are also sponsor-based mandatory on-line trainings covering topics like diversity and threatening situations. The project director attends state and national conferences to build her program and skills. She works closely with several RSVP directors across the state, some in their positions for up to 30 years, offering much to share and inspire. The director contacts the RSVP directors in Houston and Beaumont (bordering this program) and attempts to establish a collaboration with those programs when marketing potential community supporters who serve common geographic areas (e.g. TX DOW Employees Credit Union). As an enticement to get involved, announcements are sent out to volunteers via e-mail and Facebook on available community training events and teleconferences. Included in these announcements are workshops with the Better Business Bureau Education Foundation (RSVP station) regarding important information on senior fraud and scams that can cause financial exploitation and instability; articles on health topics like exercise and muscle strength related to aging and where senior exercise programs are available. RSVP offers effective practices training to non-profits regarding working with volunteers and has collaborated with the One Star Foundation to host a nonprofit training for effective practices. The RSVP stations are provided information on how our program assists them in our collaborative effort. These ground rules are documented and signed by each party in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), to ensure appropriate interaction and usage of our volunteer's time and effort. The MOU's are updated every two years. Community groups (A&M Student Assn., Jr. League, etc.) are provided with the same understanding/program information for guidance purposes during sporadic collaborative projects.

### **Program Management**

As mentioned in the recruitment section, the program director takes great care to develop volunteer activities (and correlating stations) that are of specific interest to the volunteers, as well as addressing the focus areas stipulated by the Corporation for National & Community Service office. It is made clear to both volunteers and volunteer stations that political or religious activities are not allowable as RSVP volunteer hours and will not be covered under insurance coverage. In addition, volunteer activities that are used to replace a staff person's position are not allowable under RSVP. Volunteer stations may be sought after based on the community needs identified and their capability to address those needs, or willingness to expand their scope to include new issues identified. With assistance from our advisory council, this program periodically reassesses the needs and interests identified for program development, evaluating achievements and making changes when necessary. When there

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are recurring problems within a volunteer station, and efforts have been introduced to improve matters, the council helps decide if the station should be maintained or the MOU discontinued, depending on improvement or lack of by the station. Work plans and performance measures are adapted and further developed to demonstrate the effectiveness of meeting community needs. Assistance is gleaned from the Corporation for National & Community Service website (National Service Knowledge Network) and is utilized when developing work plans/performance measurements. This program welcomes input from peers and from the designated program specialist at the Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS) to further enhance the direction and productivity of our efforts.

As per directives by the Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS), RSVP of Galveston county has reduced our volunteers by approximately fifty percent. The volunteers and stations removed were sent an explanation (letter attached) of programming changes established by CNCS. Volunteers were offered the option of including one of the focus areas in their volunteer activities to remain in the RSVP program. Volunteer stations were given the opportunity to create projects falling under one of the focus areas. As a result, our RSVP program and stations are streamlined and fall under focus area categories 100%.

UTMB performs an annual review of the program, the director's performance, effectiveness and adherence to input from the CNCS program specialist and volunteer surveys. UTMB, as well as the RSVP Advisory Council, review goals and outcomes of volunteer projects. Based on this information, recommendations are made and changes initiated. As mentioned earlier, RSVP volunteers are periodically surveyed to be sure the program is meeting their personal needs.

Volunteer information is maintained through a database, using the highly recommended Volunteer Reporter software. This tracks volunteers' names, contact information, as well as their volunteer involvement by location and hours. Information pertinent to projects and their outcomes are acquired through volunteer timesheets and volunteer station reports, which are recorded into the E-grants system, utilized by the Corporation for National & Community Service. All hard copy information, such as volunteer applications, correspondence and surveys are kept confidential and maintained in a locked area, as required.

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Program expenditures are monitored by the program director and the sponsor, through monthly financial statements and meetings when needed. UTMB has a department titled "Office of Sponsored Programs," which supports our grant by handling financial reporting and the drawdown of funds. The financial reporting is submitted only after review and approval from the program director. RSVP seeks in-kind contributions whenever possible (refer to "Strengthening Communities" section), which aids this project by expanding resources and reducing spending (i.e., volunteer appreciation and training costs). RSVP of Galveston County maintains support from the business community (i.e., banks, hotels, chambers of commerce, retail businesses) who wish to promote volunteerism and specifically encourage RSVP's senior volunteers in their endeavors. We particularly focus on those offering programs or benefits to the senior population (e.g. Texas DOW Employees Credit Union Studio 55+ Club). The Texas Association of Senior Service Corps Directors (TASSCD) offers annual professional training conferences which the RSVP of Galveston County program staff attends. Project STAR and the CNCS Resource Center (National Knowledge Network) are also support initiatives utilized by this program.

Local Attorney (and TX State Rep.) Craig Eiland has contributed the lunch and advertising expenses for a non-profit training workshop hosted by RSVP (and sponsored by the One Star Foundation). He continues to offer financial support for RSVP events.

### **Organizational Capability**

The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB) is the oldest medical school in continuous operation west of the Mississippi River. UTMB has an enrollment of over 2,000 students in its four schools and two institutes. There are over 1,000 full time faculty members. Clinical training and operations take place in seven teaching hospitals, all of which are owned and operated by UTMB, and are physically located on campus. There are 147 specialty and sub-specialty hospital and outpatient clinics. UTMB is one of six health components of the 15-institution University of Texas System, which is governed by the President's Council, a multidisciplinary group of top level administrators working with the president to map the university's course for the future and address issues that ultimately touch every patient, student, faculty and staff member. The UTMB Governance Group, predecessor to the President's Council, established the Senior Services Office on May 7, 1996, operating under the Sealy Center on Aging (SCOA). Since that time, multiple outreach programs (within SCOA) have been established for the senior population. The RSVP program was launched under this department at UTMB in January, 2002. Senior programs, apart from RSVP, include health

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education at the SCOA Learning Center (health resource library); Medicare update workshops; healthier living activities including "gentle" exercise classes (yoga & functional fitness) through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) classes and the walking club at the SCOA Learning Center. The RSVP program has access to, and interacts regularly with, the seniors attending these programs, as well as the UTMB Retiree Association.

Ritchie Adoue, the program director, is the only paid staff person under this grant. She is now serving in her thirteenth year of successfully overseeing this program. Ms. Adoue has extensive background in marketing, administration, accounting, public speaking, and has spent over 20 years working with specialized populations. Some of her skills/background include: human resources, grant management, contract consultant/trainer, conducting workshops, business/fiscal administration and business ownership. Ten years of her experience were spent identifying, creating and maintaining employment opportunities for adults with the most severe disabilities, including their job placement and training. This has allowed her tremendous exposure to the development of strong marketing strategies. She has served, and continues to serve, on several non-profit boards, often in leadership positions, including two terms as RSVP vice-president for the Texas Association of Senior Service Corps Directors (TASSCD). The program director actively maintains a visible role in the Galveston County community, as the RSVP director and as an active volunteer in her personal time. Ms. Adoue is well-connected in the community. Her professional and personal commitments have produced an increase in visibility for the RSVP program, resulting in new volunteer interest, recruitment and support. The director has received favorable reviews on every UTMB annual performance evaluation and is well-liked and respected by the volunteers in the RSVP program and her peers alike. She has earned a certificate of appreciation from Texas Governor Rick Perry for being on a steering committee for the One Star state conference. Five of her county mayors have also issued certificates in support of the Galveston County RSVP volunteers and program.

Financial management systems for grants are operated in the UTMB "Office for Sponsored Programs." UTMB has developed institutional cost accounting standards for sponsored research grants and contracts by using the principles set forth in the Office of Business and Management Circulars A-21 and A110. Financial management systems, including procurement and human resources, meet the requirements of OMB Circular A-110. Recent audits performed under OMB Circular A-133 have not found any material weaknesses in our systems or our internal controls.

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researchers attracted more than \$158 million in federal grants in fiscal year 2009, on par with research funding from the previous year, despite the effects of Hurricane Ike in 2008. This includes grants totaling more than \$12 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, as well as a \$2 million Department of Education grant awarded to the School of Nursing for construction of an interprofessional simulation center designed to serve medical, nursing and health professions students. UTMB received a \$10.9 million grant to establish the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease Clinical Proteomics Center in Bio-defense, the only such center in the nation. UTMB's National Bio-defense Training Center was awarded significant federal funding to help meet the growing regional, national and international demand for well-trained bio-containment scientists and engineers.

UTMB launched the RSVP grant in January, 2002. Since that time, this program has been led by Ms. Adoue, who has consistently achieved the program goals set forth in the annual grant proposals submitted to and evaluated by the Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS). At the end of each grant year, CNCS provides feedback and suggestions are made to improve the program and its outcomes. Their input is utilized to strengthen this program. The program has undergone 3 audits by the CNCS and made positive changes according to findings. The director maintains involvement with other volunteer projects in order to understand the volunteers' experience and create a working relationship with them as well as the station. RSVP volunteers find the director working alongside them on many weekend and holiday projects (e.g., MLK Day) on her personal time. Impact-based programming is developed according to prioritized issues identified within the county, in accordance with the new CNCS focus areas. Such issues are discovered through relationships with non-profit agencies who keep us updated as community needs change for them; places of worship who tend to have community members come to them for their personal struggles and needs; and county statistics and highlighted newspaper stories that alert us to growing problems and concerns. This program continues to meet the goals set forth each year, as they change. RSVP ensures input from each of these sources, as well as the RSVP advisory council members, by the use of an annual survey that pinpoints ongoing needs, new needs, what has worked in addressing these needs and what has failed. The advisory council and program sponsor have access to this information and provide direction to the RSVP program director.

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The program director oversees the recruitment and placement of volunteers, handles data management and reporting (via Volunteer Reporter program software), identifies and establishes potential volunteer stations/projects in coordination with community needs and national focus areas, provides training and support to stations when needed, develops marketing strategies to enhance participation and community visibility, and establishes partnerships to accommodate program needs. The Sealy Center on Aging supports this program by providing furnished office space, all needed technology (fax machine, copier and cell phone), two support staff designated to assist the program director with the acquisition of supplies; making travel arrangements and processing related expense advances and reimbursements and other clerical needs upon request. The support staff makes acquisitions, reimbursements and travel arrangements according to UTMB's internal policies for each of those areas. The staff and researchers in this department work in a team effort and avail their skills to the director when needing senior-related health information, trends and statistics. The Sealy Center on Aging (SCOA) extends the RSVP project outreach even further through their interaction with senior populations. Such interaction includes research activities, patient visits and the geriatric social worker, volunteer opportunities, leisure health and college-level courses (OLLI). SCOA makes computer access available to seniors during weekdays in their Sealy Center on Aging Learning Center. All of these inter-departmental avenues collaborate and foster the efforts of the RSVP program.

As mentioned in previous sections, we undergo annual assessments by the sponsor (UTMB) and by the RSVP advisory council. UTMB has its own assessment tool they use for staff evaluation purposes and the advisory council uses different tools of measurement as they see fit, located in the CNCS Resource Center. We survey RSVP volunteers for their perspectives and suggestions to understand what attracts them to volunteerism. All of this information is cultivated for future programming decisions.

### **Other**

The following is a summary of current and prior efforts listed by CNCS priority focus areas:

Disaster Services:

In 2008, after Galveston County was hit by Hurricane Ike, a group of RSVP volunteers and younger volunteers they recruited, came together to focus on recovery efforts that continued through 2010. We

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do not currently have ongoing active disaster service activities, however, RSVP has access received disaster Response Training and is ready to reactivate volunteers should another need arise.

### Education:

RSVP volunteers are helping a new non-profit (Gulf Pride for Youth) serving gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender youth (gibt), ages 13 to 20. According to statistics (found in related work plan) these kids are at a much greater risk of being homeless, bullied in school and among their peers and family members. The suicide rate is noted as being increased for this population as well. This project is run strictly by volunteers, with no paid staff. They are receiving RSVP volunteer assistance to maintain a safe haven

for these kids and provide mentoring and support, mostly from other gibt volunteers.

### Environmental Stewardship:

RSVP recruited volunteers for a non-profit called the Galveston Island Tree Conservancy. After Hurricane Ike hit Galveston in 2008, 40,000 trees were lost. The Conservancy website states: "It also denied residents of the infrastructural benefits that urban forests provide: reduced storm runoff, cleaner air, improved water quality, shade and lower energy consumption." They are attempting to reforest the island and at the same time, teach the community about the importance of trees and green space. The NeighborWoods project is a partnership between the Tree Conservancy, the City's Tree Committee, the Texas Forest Service and local neighborhood associations. Participating partners include Texas A&M University at Galveston and the Galveston County Master Gardeners.

### Healthy Futures:

RSVP supports, through volunteer recruitment and capacity building, an Adult Day Program called Libbie's Place. In coordination with that program, a telephone reassurance project is conducted to promote aging in place for our senior population throughout Galveston County. The phone communication and personal visits allow frail and elderly persons to remain living in their private home by having someone check in on them regularly, do light chores, provide transportation to doctors and grocery shopping, as well as having the benefit of increased socialization.

The Better Business Bureau Education Foundation provides valuable information on scams and fraud targeting our older population. This educates seniors on how not to become a victim of financial

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crimes that could cause identity theft and possibly jeopardize their financial security and home ownership.

Meals on Wheels ensures that over a hundred frail or homebound seniors are receiving at least one nutritious meal five days per week.

RSVP provides volunteer assistance to five area food pantries, where collectively over a thousand food packages are handed out monthly.

Veterans:

Galveston County RSVP is now connecting veterans (including homeless) to services and benefits available to them (including peer support groups) via Galveston County VA office; Gulf Coast Mental Health Veteran Services program and the Elk's Lodge #126.

Health Education

Volunteers participate in several projects addressing proper nutrition, chronic illnesses, diabetes, heart wellness, cancer Alzheimer's, and patient-centered health decisions.

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

N/A