

Narratives

Executive Summary

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The mission of the Harnett County Department of Public Health is to prevent illness, diseases, and injuries, promote healthy lifestyles, and keep the environment clean, healthy and safe. As a part of the Department of Public Health, the Harnett County Division on Aging coordinates services and programs for older adults, educates the public in successful aging, and acts as a catalyst for new programs and services in the interest of older adults. The Harnett County Division on Aging is proposing to utilize 300 older adults age 55 and over as volunteers in the RSVP program and is requesting funding in the amount of \$33,622. Service categories in the RSVP grant include, Healthy Futures, Education, Veterans and Military Families, Economic Opportunity, Capacity Building and Other Community Priorities. Harnett County RSVP will address needs within our communities to support independent living for our older adults with home delivered meals, transportation, as well as support services at local senior centers. Literacy will be addressed by volunteers teaching adults and tutoring/mentoring children. Children will have a safe place to live as RSVP volunteers serve as advocates through the Guardian ad Litem Program. Families suffering from food insecurity will be served by volunteers at local food pantries. Seniors who are unable to assist themselves with issues pertaining to Medicare and the filing of income taxes will receive assistance from RSVP volunteers. Health services will be provided through local hospitals and blood drives. Nonprofit organizations unable to fund paid positions will benefit from the skills of RSVP volunteers such as chambers of commerce, thrift stores and local museums. RSVP volunteers will serve veterans and military families through support and mentoring in the Veterans Court System in Harnett County. To evaluate the community needs the RSVP staff will meet with existing site managers, review current "customer surveys" and research local and national data for trends in the needs of our local communities. Input from the RSVP Community Advisory Group is crucial to strengthen current needs and address new needs in each community. Through resources provided by this grant, Harnett County RSVP program anticipates increasing the number of seniors living independently, decreasing the number of food insecure families, decreasing the number of adults who cannot read and help our children to be better educated. Medicare beneficiaries will have affordable insurance that will meet their needs and seniors and low income clients will file taxes on time and with more money to put back into the local economy.

Strengthening Communities

Narratives

Strengthening Communities

Harnett County is a rural community in the center of North Carolina with a population of nearly 124,987 that spreads over 600 square miles. Most of the population is concentrated in the towns of Dunn (9,758), Erwin (4,405), Coats (2,112), Lillington (3,194) and Angier (4,350); however, the population in the western part of the county is growing rapidly with retirees and military families connected to Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base. US Census Bureau statistics show that the distribution of the population is; under 5 years old 7.1%; under 18 years old 27.5%; 10.9% over the age of 65. The cultural diversity of Harnett County is 72.3% white; 21.6% black; 11.7% Hispanic and 1.7% American Indian. The economic status of Harnett County is signified by the median family income of \$44,244.00 and per capita income of \$20,039.00. The poverty rate in Harnett County is 16.4% with the North Carolina poverty rate at 16.8%. Harnett County is home to two area hospitals; Harnett Health Betsy Johnson Regional Hospital in Dunn, a fully accredited 101 bed facility with 24 hour emergency medical service, and Central Harnett Health, a 51 bed hospital located in Lillington with 24 hour emergency medical services as well. Education indicators are 82.9% of persons over the age of 25 graduated from high school and 17.6% earned a Bachelors' Degree or higher. There are 28 schools in the Harnett County Public School system with a total of 20,400 students. Campbell University, one of the largest religion based universities in North Carolina, is located in Buies Creek with over 4,006 students. The University hosts masters programs in Education and Science and has established Schools of Law, Business, Pharmacy, Education, Divinity and Nursing. Central Carolina Community College with its main campus in neighboring Lee County hosts a campus in Harnett County offering Associate Degrees in Arts, Science and Applied Science as well as non-curriculum Adult Basic Education and other adult education classes. The top employers in Harnett County are Harnett County Public Schools (2,132), Campbell University (750), Harnett County Government (887), Food Lion Distribution Center (758) and Harnett Health Betsy Johnson Regional Hospital (1050). The current unemployment rate in Harnett County is 7.4% which is above the state unemployment rate of 6.5%. The RSVP Community Advisory Council is elected as a diverse representation of community leaders in Harnett County. The Council consists of members representing volunteers, volunteer stations, local government agencies and human services. The Council monitors and evaluates the program annually. They also work with RSVP staff to enhance the RSVP program in Harnett County. Because members of the Council are active in their local communities they are able to report back to the RSVP staff the needs within their local community. The Council assists in planning activities such as the Annual RSVP Senior Citizens Fair, the RSVP Senior Citizens Prom, and volunteer recognition

Narratives

events throughout the year. The Council will solicit in-kind and monetary funding for special recognition events. Council members assist in publicizing events in their communities. RSVP staff and Council members participate in events through Harnett County especially local events to promote active life styles for older adults. Communities throughout Harnett County promote their individual communities by organizing festivals each year. RSVP supports communities by participating in events such as the Angier Senior Expo and Relay for Life of Harnett County. Expositions throughout the year allow RSVP to recruit volunteers and make the community more aware of its opportunities. Harnett County RSVP sponsors the annual Senior Citizen's Fair each year during the month of May, which is celebrated nationally as "Older American's Month." The fair promotes health, wellness and community involvement for older adults in Harnett County and strengthens relationships with non-profit agencies, civic organizations and businesses. RSVP works with various community based and non-profit organizations, communities of faith and governmental agencies to encourage identification of community needs, thus enabling the RSVP volunteers to meet these needs. Harnett County RSVP partners with 25 local agencies, nonprofit organizations and proprietary health organizations by providing volunteers to identify, address and meet community needs. Through this association with the agencies and churches, RSVP is able to build public awareness and support. Harnett County RSVP strives to bring together people of diverse backgrounds through a number of volunteer stations and activities. The volunteers themselves reflect diverse backgrounds as retired homemakers, farmers, teachers, accountants, nurses, veterans, business leaders and public servants. Diversity within our program is also reflected through the Coharie Native Indian Association, which is one of our volunteer stations, and a senior center located in a predominately African American community. Volunteers with the Harnett County RSVP program provide service to those in need such as: families living in poverty seeking assistance from the food pantry, as an advocate for children in foster care or the abused and neglected through Guardian ad Litem, low income families who cannot afford to file their taxes, assisting low income Medicare beneficiaries to apply for assistance in paying for prescription medications, or delivering a hot nutritious meal to the home-bound elderly. Volunteers are kept informed and invited to participate in activities and events taking place throughout the community through the RSVP Newsletter. To encourage our seniors to stay active, volunteers are encouraged to get involved as volunteers and/or participants of the Mid-Carolina and State Senior Games. In Harnett County there is currently one other National Service Program, AmeriCorps Vista which has been established through Campbell University Campus Ministries. RSVP has partnered with the AmeriCorps program on several initiatives. RSVP also works closely with other organizations

Narratives

to incorporate senior services into agencies and their programs such as the American Red Cross Blood Drives, VITA Tax Counseling for the Elderly and NC Department of Insurance Seniors Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP). In 2014 we started a new initiative to the Harnett County RSVP Program, serving veterans and military families. RSVP volunteers serve in the 11th District Veterans Court to act as mentors for veterans and families who are in court. This program is new and Harnett County is the first county in North Carolina to hold this program and serves as a nation-wide model for other states and counties interested in implementing the Veterans Court Model. Volunteers through RSVP are available on court days to provide encouragement and support to these veterans and their families in the Jury Selection room as they await their case to be heard. Harnett County RSVP continues enhance the organization's capacity of local non-profit organizations and agencies by adding qualified volunteers to these organizations. Making a "good" match between volunteer and organization is critical to the success of the volunteer and the organization.

Recruitment and Development

Recruitment and Development

RSVP staff and members of the Community Advisory Council participate in year-round activities throughout the county educating and promoting RSVP and encouraging others to volunteer through RSVP. RSVP recruits volunteers and increases public awareness through public speaking engagements, newspaper articles, radio programs and the distribution of brochures. RSVP participates in area festivals and trade shows both independently and by partnering with other organizations. RSVP staff are involved in local and statewide organizations to promote volunteerism and community service. Once enrolled, RSVP volunteers go through an extensive orientation process. RSVP staff provide information regarding policies and procedures and recording of hours, insurance, separation from service, and provides them a handbook. The volunteer is then introduced to the agency they have selected and receives additional orientation to the policies and procedures of the organization. Volunteer Stations are encouraged to include volunteers in staff meetings, training and other functions within their organization. Training by individual stations is dictated by the complexity of the assignment, for instance: extensive training for VITA for Tax Counseling is provided through the IRS; food safety for volunteers delivering meals to the elderly and assisting with congregate meals at senior centers is provided by Harnett County Environmental Health; NC Department of Insurance provides quarterly training for SHIIP volunteer Medicare counselors; the Guardian ad Litem program provides extensive training for volunteers working as child advocates in court cases involving abuse and neglect; Literacy, Red Cross and Hospice volunteers receive specialized training and orientation;

Narratives

volunteers serving at Harnett Health Betsy Johnson, Central Harnett Health Hospital, and the Elderly Nutrition program participate in an initial training/screening and/or orientation as well as quarterly training. RSVP volunteers are encouraged to use their volunteer experience and leadership skills at their stations to recruit new volunteers. Volunteers at the Senior Centers and Nutrition Sites encourage participants to "become part of the solution" to independent living by becoming an active volunteer. RSVP volunteers are encouraged to reach their full potential within the organizations they serve. Older adults over the age of 55 are interviewed by RSVP staff as a way of "getting to know" them and learn their interests and skills. Before placing volunteers with a site, a local background check is run on the volunteer as well as a search in the National Sex Offender Registry to ensure the safest possible environment for the delicate population that is served by RSVP volunteers. Harnett County RSVP provides technical assistance to RSVP staff, volunteer stations, managers, and the Community Advisory Council. As a part of Harnett County Government, RSVP staff is encouraged to participate in any and all workshops and classes provided by the county. Staff attends State CNCS meetings, trainings and state volunteer association conferences. Station managers participate in annual training that provides RSVP updates and volunteer management training. In an effort to acknowledge volunteers for their work, RSVP provides recognition for volunteers throughout the year by sending a birthday card the week of their birthday as well as a volunteer appreciation card during April. Volunteer Stations are also encouraged to provide individual recognition for their volunteers. An elegant recognition gala is held yearly, which is the highlight of recognition events. Local businesses, individuals and volunteer stations sponsor "tables" to help fund the event. Volunteer stations use this opportunity to sponsor a table to honor their special volunteers. Decorations, invitations, entertainment and meal planning are centered on a different theme each year. Volunteers, Station Managers, local dignitaries and elected officials are invited to attend the gala event. Each year, every Volunteer Station is given the opportunity to nominate one of their volunteers for 'Volunteer of the Year'. Each nominee receives a certificate and incentive. A plaque is given to the winner. RSVP Advisory Board members are continually net-working to provide recognition to volunteers and volunteer sites throughout the year. The best tool for recruiting and retaining volunteers is leading by example; therefore, by encouraging open communication between the RSVP staff, Volunteer Station and the volunteer, the program flourishes and grows. As a result, volunteers recruit other volunteers.

Program Management

Program Management

Harnett County RSVP will engage older adults aged 55 or over in identifying, addressing and solving

Narratives

problems within their communities while taking into consideration their personal interests, use of skills and life-long experiences. Volunteers showing leadership qualities and/or an interest in leadership within RSVP will be given that opportunity. RSVP volunteers will be assigned to Volunteer Stations that best utilize their skills and interests. Volunteer Station managers will be trained and oriented and receive a RSVP Volunteer Station Handbook. The Handbook contains information on successfully managing RSVP volunteers, rules, regulations and necessary forms. RSVP staff will visit each volunteer site periodically in an effort to maintain a good working relationship with Station managers and to meet with volunteers in their work environment. Volunteers will receive orientation by the RSVP and Station staff. Each Volunteer Station Memorandum of Understanding will be kept up to date and renewed every three years. The staff will assist stations in identifying Impact Based and Performance Measurement Programming. Stations will be encouraged to develop assignments by matching the interest, skills and experience of the volunteers to best meet the needs of the community. Volunteer Stations will be monitored and evaluated to determine if new assignments are needed. RSVP staff will provide technical assistance to Volunteer Stations to assist in providing quality programs for the volunteers. Harnett County RSVP assesses project performance annually through the use of the logic model. Volunteer station staff, Community Advisory Council and volunteers are included in the annual assessment using the Senior Corps Project STAR model. Findings are reported to Corporation for National Service, Community Advisory Council and funders. Assessment findings will also be used to request additional funding when appropriate. Volunteer stations will use the assessment information as a tool to evaluate their volunteer programs. Each Volunteer Station displays a notebook provided by RSVP, so volunteers may easily record their time. RSVP staff will visit the Station at the beginning of each month or at least every other month to collect their time sheets and meet with Station staff. Time sheets, which have been signed by each volunteer, are then signed by the Station Manager. RSVP staff will discuss issues related to maintaining and improving the RSVP program. Individual volunteer hours are entered into the RSVP Reporter Software, which meets CNS guidelines. Each year, RSVP staff updates the volunteer enrollment information. A current mailing list of volunteers, Station Managers, local elected officials and dignitaries is maintained. As an agency of Harnett County Government, RSVP receives the benefit of support and resources of other county agencies and has built partnerships with these agencies. RSVP volunteers are vital to many agencies in providing services and support. The Harnett County Board of Commissioners provides financial support for this program, which includes in-kind support. The Harnett County Finance Office provides support staff in managing grant funds by electronically conducting a draw down of funds. The

Narratives

Financial Status Report is prepared by RSVP staff and a copy is submitted to the Finance Office for draw downs. In accordance with Harnett County policy, all departments within Harnett County Government that operate under grant programs produce their own Financial Status Report (or similar document), which is signed by the Department Head and the Finance Officer. The Finance Office also processes staff travel reimbursements submitted by RSVP staff. All invoices and travel reimbursements are submitted to the Finance Office for payment. All requisitions are pre-approved by Finance and must meet specific guidelines set forth by Harnett County Government for the purchase of supplies and equipment. Staff must also adhere to the Harnett County personnel ordinances.

Organizational Capability

Organizational Capacity

Harnett County Department on Aging (formerly Harnett County Council for Senior Citizens) was established as a 501C3 nonprofit organization in 1973 to serve adults over the age of 60. In 1973, the Council applied for and received the grant to become the first "rural" RSVP in North Carolina. As a successful nonprofit organization, the Council was innovative in starting other programs that served older adults in Harnett County. The programs included transportation, in home care, information and referral, home delivered meals, nutrition sites and senior centers. In 1990, the Council was offered the opportunity to become part of Harnett County Government as the Department on Aging. Becoming a part of county government offered many benefits to the program, which included enhanced salaries and benefits, partnerships with other county agencies, financial oversight, better facilities and other resources. The department blossomed and grew under the county "umbrella". On July 1, 2009, the Department on Aging became a Division under the Department of Public Health. All programs and services have remained the same. The Division continues to benefit from the support, resources and other additional technology and state of the art equipment offered through the Department of Public Health. Harnett County RSVP has a full-time director and part time senior administrative support assistant. Seventy percent of the director's position and 35% of the administrative support assistant's position are allocated to the grant. The remaining 30% of the RSVP Director and 65% of the support assistant's position is designated county funds through the Division on Aging. Working with the Division on Aging for 6 years, the RSVP Director has been in the current position for 3 years and is responsible for program management and has experience in volunteer management, program management, grant writing and public relations. The director's combination of education (AS and BS) and seventeen years experience with the local school system and Mental Health provide the skills and the knowledge in managing the RSVP program. The administrative assistant has been in her current

Narratives

position for 14 years. The administrative assistant attended a local community college and was employed by the Harnett County Finance Department for 8½ years prior to transferring to RSVP. Her prior experience in the Finance Department provided knowledge and experience in accounting and bookkeeping. Harnett County Finance Office provides support staff in managing grant funds by electronically conducting a draw down of funds. The Federal Status Report is prepared by RSVP staff and a copy is submitted to the Finance Office for draw downs. In accordance with Harnett County policy, all departments within Harnett County Government that operate under grant programs produce their own Financial Status Report (or similar document), which is signed by the Department Head and the Finance Officer. The Finance Office also processes staff travel reimbursements submitted by RSVP. All invoices are submitted to the Finance Office for payment. All requisitions are pre-approved by Finance, for Harnett County government has specific guidelines for the purchase of supplies, equipment, facilities, and personnel policies and procedures to which each staff member must adhere. Since 1973, Harnett County RSVP has been a recipient of federal funding used to manage the RSVP program. All required grants and reports have been completed as directed by state and national entities. All recommendations relative to grants and reports have been amended as requested. New initiatives have been implemented into the program including programming for impact. Volunteers and stations have been introduced to the new procedures for recording and documenting results. Sustainability of Harnett County RSVP is based on 41 years of a successful program and support from the local community to include the Harnett County Board of Commissioners, local agencies and current sponsor.

Other

Other

One of the main focuses of the Harnett County Elderly Nutrition Program is to provide daily nutritious meals to the elderly and home bound. Although "very little experience" and "no special skills" are required for the program. The impact is tremendous. RSVP is relying on baby boomers during these times when the economy is suffering and soaring gas prices have made it difficult for some of our volunteers to deliver their route. Baby boomers enrolled in RSVP are making a difference. Currently, RSVP volunteers participate in two programs that provide assistance to disadvantaged children and youth. Guardian ad Litem volunteers are trained to act as advocates for the best interest of abused or neglected children. Volunteers interview parties, review reports and visit the child in order to ensure the child's safety to locate a permanent caregiver for the child. RSVP volunteers are also making an impact through service at the Harnett Food Pantry. Volunteers, not

Narratives

only recruit other volunteers, but they also solicit area churches and organizations to donate to the Pantry. Area schools get involved in service to our community through the Harnett Food Pantry. Students raise money through various clubs and organize food drives during the months of November and December. In addition to raising money and collecting food, the students assist in delivering the food and stocking shelves working along side of RSVP volunteers. Another unique endeavor is our use of volunteers during a disaster. Harnett County RSVP is active in Disaster Preparedness and Response as a part of the Harnett County Emergency Operations Staff. Harnett County Emergency Management Staff participates in the Annual RSVP Senior Citizens' Fair and distributes important information to older adults. Trained RSVP staff are also activated during times of disaster to assist in disaster response and recovery. During a disaster, RSVP staff work closely with the Red Cross to recruit and manage the volunteers.

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A