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Executive Summary

An estimated 527 RSVP volunteers will serve in Chautauqua County.

Some of the activities will include:

- Healthy Futures: Food and Obesity by means of Food Distribution and Food Pantry Support
- Healthy Futures: Aging in Place serving in Companionship, Food Delivery and Preventing Elder Abuse.
- Healthy Futures: Access to Care serving to lead Bone Builder classes
- Healthy Futures: Access to Care serving in the community to record blood pressures
- Education: serving to tutor children in public schools
- Economic Development: providing Financial Literacy and Assisting VITA

The primary focus of our project is Healthy Futures: Food and Obesity. At the end of the three-year grant, our project hopes to report that 70% of clients served at Food Pantries and Food Distribution organizations will indicate through surveys they are able to feed their families and report they are less food insecure. The frail elderly, the disabled, and isolated seniors will receive supportive services relating to Access to Care and Aging in Place; empowering 70% of these individuals to remain living independently at home. The CNCS federal investment of \$53,216.00 will be supplemented by \$5,973.00 of New York State Office for Aging funds, \$5,000 United Way grant funds, in-kind funds, applicant funds, and local funds totaling \$107,537.00.

Strengthening Communities

Chautauqua County RSVP, sponsored by Lutheran Social Services Group, Inc. has actively recruited and engaged volunteers in the entire county since 1975. Chautauqua County is located in southwestern New York State -- the state's western gateway. Our county borders Pennsylvania across the southern tier of New York State. Like many areas in the northeast, the population is shrinking and aging and there are high levels of poverty, a smaller manufacturing base and the out-migration of educated young people. The county is rural and has only two cities -- Jamestown and Dunkirk. The county historically was home to many manufacturers, but slowly they have closed or relocated. As jobs left, so did much of the population, with older adults remaining. To replace the manufacturing jobs, major efforts are being made to attract tourists. As the existing population ages, jobs in the healthcare industry have emerged. The jobs created in the healthcare and tourism industries have not replaced the family sustaining jobs lost due to manufacturing moving out of the area.

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The majority of our volunteers are placed in southern Chautauqua County particularly Jamestown as it is the most populated and hosts a public transportation system. Jamestown is also home to the majority of non-profit, educational, and governmental agencies. Our county is impoverished and aging but we are blessed with many caring individuals who offer their time, talents and expertise to tend to those affected by poverty and to care for our elders. Our project focuses on food insecurity, and caring for our seniors. Our seniors are of utmost importance assuring they are given the opportunity to live independently as long as possible and are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

Chautauqua County is part of Northern Appalachia. The term "Appalachia" is used to describe a cultural region in the eastern United States that stretches from southern New York State to northern Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia. Appalachia is an area characterized by poverty, lack of education and difficulty accessing health care.

Our county measures 1,062 square miles, 65 miles across with an estimated population of 133,080 inhabitants (2013 US Census Quickfacts), representing a 9.6% decrease since the 2000 census. The number of people has decreased yet there is a 28% increase in the Hispanic and Latino populations (86.5% of which are Puerto Rican). By census definition, 58.8% of the County's population resides in urban areas, while 41.2% reside in rural areas. The vast geographic area of the County coupled with the fact that almost half of its residents live in sparsely populated areas lends itself to transportation and access challenges. It is also important to recognize that the County is geographically and somewhat socially and economically divided into two regions. The "north county" region includes the City of Dunkirk and "south county" region encompassing the City of Jamestown, the County's largest population center of 30,737 (US Census Quickfacts 2013).

In June 2014, the unemployment rate was 6.0-6.9% (Department of Labor) for the county. The median household income is \$41,975 (US Census Quickfacts); this is lower than New York State (\$57,683) and the national level (\$ 53,046). Of this population, 19% of families are considered impoverished in Chautauqua County as defined by Kids Count Data Center and persons living below poverty level is 19.1% (US Census Quickfacts). The higher than state and national unemployment rates and lower wages mean there is a great need for assistance related to basic needs such as food, clothing and household items.

The population of our county is aging, meaning many need access to care. US Quickfacts tell us: older adults over the age of 65 years make up nearly 18% of the population, 18% of older adults live below poverty levels, and 12.8% report disabilities relating to "independent living".

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Feed America states: "A critical component to a healthy life is nutrition. Beginning at birth, the intake of vital nutrients is essential to the growth and development of a healthy individual. Good nutrition, particularly in the first three years of life, is important in establishing and maintaining a good foundation that has implications on a child's future physical and mental health, academic achievement, and economic productivity. Unfortunately, food insecurity is an obstacle that threatens that critical foundation." In Chautauqua County, our foundation has been threatened by the many individuals affected by Food Insecurity. Our elder population needs adequate food and proper nutrition to prevent serious health conditions, support recovery from illnesses, and promote their overall well-being.

Our project's main objective is Healthy Futures as it relates to food and the various ways it is distributed, either through organizations or Food Pantries. RSVP volunteers work closely with Western New York Food Bank to secure, organize, and accept food donations to distribute to eligible individuals and families. The Food Pantries and organizations are sustained by a voluntary workforce guided by a volunteer Food Pantry Coordinator. Community gardeners lend their support by donating fresh produce from "Giving Gardens", some being located right at the Food Pantry sites. Other volunteers offer education about preserving fresh produce, nutritional cooking, and proper food storage and preparation. Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Master Gardeners program is an integral partner in our volunteer force. A requirement of each Master Gardener is a yearly commitment of 50 hours of community service, so RSVP has welcomed these knowledgeable participants into our project.

Reported by Kids Well-Being Indicators Clearinghouse, families with children and youth (birth to 17 years): 30.9% live below the poverty level, 33.6% receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance, and 52.4% of children receive free or reduced lunches.

Our project cooperates and collaborates with other non-profits sharing resources whenever possible and drawing upon the capability of other agencies to affect change in our community. The United Way has provided resources for volunteer travel costs. Volunteers without vehicles who must use public transportation are given priority for funds. We have received mutual assistance for volunteer transportation from a volunteer site that possesses a van granted by the New York State Department of Transportation. The grant stipulates the van may be used and shared with other agencies or services. This has aided our travel costs as they pick up our volunteers, deliver them safely to their sites and then pick them up for their return trip home. We continue to search for more agency owned vans like this to enhance our travel assistance. Our volunteer stations lend both financial and physical

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assistance at our Volunteer Recognition events. Not only our local sponsor but local foundations have been consistently generous with grants for volunteer supplemental insurance, travel, and recognition.

Volunteer site staff are cooperative with surveys as they pertain to performance measurements. The site supervisors share existing reports for our project's use or customize their surveys to meet our guidelines. When specialized measurements are needed, staff are always eager to help as they benefit from RSVP volunteers.

Recruitment and Development

Our program is focused on recruitment, development and public relations. Recruitment efforts take the normal route (television, newspaper, radio), but we find greater success through our contacts with managers of senior apartment complexes, through participation in senior groups, involvement with liaisons at volunteer sites, and most importantly through one-on-one recruitment enacted by the current volunteers. Seniors involved with our program are recruited, trained, advocated for, educated and recognized publicly both as a group and individually by the program and by the sites.

Placing articles in senior sections of newspapers telling success stories, honoring special achievements, and participating in Senior/Health Fairs helps make our project and volunteer efforts visible in the community. Monthly presentations before various organizations are helpful to conveying our message for volunteers. A most effective recruitment tool is contacts with Senior Subsidized Housing. The application process to reside in these low-income HUD subsidized apartments meet our age parameters and their discrimination guidelines are consistent with those of Corporation for National and Community Services (CNCS) prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of race, color, creed, religion, sex, familial status, national origin, or disability.

Volunteers receive positive feedback from their site supervisors and the RSVP staff. At our yearly Recognition Events, RSVP secures letters of commendation from local, state, and federal elected officials to thank the volunteers for reaching milestones in service or extraordinary efforts. As funds permit, the presidential service awards are also obtained to the delight of our volunteers.

RSVP devotes a great deal of time with the prospective volunteer interview prior to placement. This has proven to be a good investment of staff time and is mutually beneficial to us and the volunteer. This interview uncovers the volunteer's desires, preferences, and leadership potential. We identify their areas of expertise, past occupation or work experience, and any talents they possess and wish to share. We discuss their "passions" and hobbies to consider when discussing potential placements. An example might be a retired nurse comes in for an interview and we may assume this individual would

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enjoy doing blood pressures at a local agency. Our experience has shown, many time these individuals are seeking something totally different from their current or pre-retirement careers. They may well be suited to serve in this capacity, but we need to look further and explore new and appealing placements where their skills, talents, and abilities may be used in new and creative ways. We also consider what skills they want to acquire as well as their preferred areas of service, whether it be Education, Healthy Futures, Veterans and Military, Environmental Stewardship, Economic Development, or Disaster Services. Once the area of service is identified, we continue on to determine what populations or groups they wish to work with "infants, the needy, elders, environment", etc. At times, volunteers wish to work independently with data entry or clerical support.

Volunteers come to us from many walks of life; matches are made with care giving attention to the preferences of the volunteers and the sites. Site structure, dress codes, or even air conditioning are items to be considered before placements. Some volunteers do not function well in a less structured setting, while others thrive in this environment. Some sites have strict dress codes and others are more relaxed. Some volunteers cannot serve without the benefit of air conditioning to assist with a health condition. After discussion with both the potential volunteer and the potential site, a visit to the proposed site is scheduled by the Project Coordinator to get acquainted with both the physical location and the staff. Conversations between the site staff and the volunteer follow to determine if this appears to be a mutually beneficial partnership. Following the first day of service, contact continues with volunteers and site staff. This is integral to assure a proper match. Volunteers are observed by site visits, contacted via telephone or in rare cases via e-mail. If and when a change is needed, it is acted upon immediately to avoid discouraging the volunteer or hinder existing relationships with sites. Beyond initial placements, site visits are commonplace.

After completion of the RSVP application form, and age verification, each volunteer receives a packet. The packet contains:

1. RSVP brochure including our customized template and our business card.
2. Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) Health Benefits of Volunteering for Older Americans.
3. Our locally created handbook which is reviewed acquaints them with community service in our county. The handbook updated annually or more often if necessary are the printed policies for RSVP volunteers. The regulations/guidelines of CNCS as well as service expectations are spelled out in large print so it may be viewed easily. Examples of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors are listed as is our termination policy. In the handbook are project specific policies - time reporting , necessary

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signatures , deadline dates, travel assistance requests and dates and details about our Recognition Events.

4. A locally created brochure, outlining the "intangible health benefits" of service.

5. The CIMA supplemental insurance coverage handout created by CIMA. This is explained in detail at the interview.

Upon successful placement, a letter is generated from the Project Director welcoming them to the project accompanied by an RSVP name badge with lanyard. Upon a successful, mutually beneficial placement, the volunteer receives and signs a Volunteer Job Description.

Chautauqua County RSVPs Primary Focus is Healthy Futures by means of Food Distribution and Food Pantry Support. Other areas where volunteers share their time, talents, and expertise are:

- Healthy Futures: Aging in Place serving in Companionship, Food Delivery and Preventing Elder Abuse.

- Healthy Futures: Access to Care leading Bone Builders classes.

- Healthy Futures: Access to Care serving in the community to record blood pressures

- Education: serving to tutor children in public schools

- Economic Development: providing Financial Literacy and Assisting VITA

- Environmental Stewardship: serving At-Risk Ecosystems

- Community Priorities

At present, our project does not have any active Veteran specific volunteer sites but 3% of our volunteers report being veterans. I believe there are more as this was not added to our application until more recently. Our project serves veterans and their families, but we do not presently have an accurate method to identify them from our all the sites our project serves. RSVP makes every effort to engage those who desire to serve, despite any disability. RSVP and our sites make reasonable accommodations for these individuals. Currently, 29% of our enrollees report some form of disability. Our project is always welcoming to the disabled.

Program Management

Your plan and infrastructure to ensure management of volunteer stations is in compliance with RSVP program regulations, such as preventing or identifying prohibitive activities.

RSVP volunteers recruited from the community are interviewed prior to placement. The interview assures each applicant is age eligible, possesses a good understanding of our project, its mission, and is familiar with community service. Each prospective volunteer is presented a local handbook which is reviewed with them at the time of the interview. The handbook identifies expectations of a volunteer.

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Listed also are the prohibitive activities while serving as an RSVP volunteer such as:

- a volunteer may not give religious instruction, conduct worship services, or engage in any form of proselytization as part of their duties.
- an RSVP volunteer may not perform any service or duty or engage in any activity which would otherwise be performed by an employed worker or which would supplant the hiring of or result in the displacement of employed workers, or impair existing contracts for service.
- under no circumstances may an RSVP volunteer receive a fee for service from service recipients, their legal guardian, members of their family, or friends. No person, organization, or agency may request or receive any compensation for services of RSVP volunteers.
- an RSVP volunteer will not be discriminated against with respect to our project or any activity or program, on the basis of race; color; national origin, including limited English proficiency; sex; age; religion; or political affiliation; or on the basis of disability, if the volunteer with a disability is qualified to serve.

Our project is fortunate to be affiliated with volunteer sites that continue to be part of our programming. The volunteer sites have consistently followed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) specifics and have been welcoming and kind to our volunteers. Those who act in a liaison capacity at the sites are accessible and agreeable. The staff members have insured that volunteers are provided many opportunities to have meaningful interactions. Sites have made major efforts to work within the confines of Performance Measurement and have completed surveys or reports as requested. They have consistently been supportive and protective of the volunteers, nurturing each relationship to ensure better performance. Volunteer site staff graciously have become involved with recognition events not only at their sites but those organized by RSVP. Time is given to fostering the relationships with the site supervisors.

The sites realize the value of our volunteers. RSVP reinforces this by sending each site a yearly report detailing the volunteer activity respective to each site. Site visits and continual conversations with site supervisors are commonplace and permit the Project Coordinator to avert or avoid inappropriate placements or unacceptable behaviors.

Many volunteer placements no longer meet the criteria for the CNCS Objectives or are not serving within our guidelines. Our project has streamlined our volunteer roster around 40%. Our project has not entered into agreements or actively signed MOUs with any agencies whose mission does not meet the 5 Year Strategic Plan (2011-2015). A few sites of longevity have remained as they are advocates for and supportive of our project. As the needs of our community change, our Advisory Council, the

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Census, United Way, and other agencies help guide our project to adapt accordingly and we will support and transition our volunteers into new activities and placements.

Your organization's track record in the Primary Focus Area, to include, if applicable, measuring performance in the Primary Focus Area.

Project evaluations are completed every year by our sponsoring agency. Project Assessments are conducted and summarized each year by the Advisory Council. Work plans and their performance measurement tools are the formal means for measurement. The work plans tell us our impact and achievements by reaching predicted goals, changing behaviors, or engaging volunteers. This is recorded by either community partner surveys, site reports, or RSVP created tools of measurement. Our project has been successful in the area of Healthy Futures as it relates to Food Security, Aging in Place, and Access to Care. Our region is rural and "neighboring" or helping others appears to be part of our culture. When someone is "in-need" or there is an apparent worthy cause, people in our county rally in support. Our past performance measurements indicated on our 2014-2015 Project Progress Reports show great success in the objectives of Healthy Futures - Food Security. Our volunteer activities surpassed our targets and we continue to build on our achievements.

Your Plan and infrastructure to ensure the project is in compliance with the RSVP federal guidelines to include establishing an RSVP Advisory Council, ensuring RSVP volunteers are placed in stations that have signed the required MOU, and ensuring all volunteers are eligible to serve.

Our project has a combined Advisory Council with Lutheran Foster Grandparent Program. The By-laws and officers guide our projects and assure we properly place our volunteers and produce favorable outcomes. To comply with federal guidelines, our project dictates only RSVP volunteers can be placed at sites where there is a current, signed, and executed MOU in place. The CNCS RSVP handbook directs our project and each regulation is strictly adhered. Lutheran, our local sponsor is well-versed in the CNCS guidelines as it has graciously served in this capacity since 1975. When each prospective volunteer is interviewed, the Project Coordinator asks to view a government issued photo ID to guarantee each new volunteer is age eligible.

Organizational Capability

Briefly describe your organization's capability to operate the RSVP project that you propose with respect to:

Your plan and infrastructure to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight (both financial and in-kind) and day-to-day operational support to ensure compliance with RSVP requirements (statuses, regulations, and applicable OMB circulars) and to ensure accountability and efficient use of available

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resources.

The yearly financial audit and review provides insight into the management of the resources of the project. The accounting procedures as outlined by Lutheran are our financial guidelines as well as those of the CNCS, the state, and other funding sources. Peachtree is our accounting software that assures all accounts are accurate and properly detailed. In-kind forms are detailed and reported each month. The Project Director approves all expenditures to assure they are necessary and reasonable and signs checks up to the established threshold of \$5,000.00. Checks over \$5,000.00 require a second signature and approval from either the President/CEO or Chief Financial Officer of Lutheran. The only exception is if the check or expenditure is payable to Lutheran (our sponsoring agency) -- such does not require the second signature. All accounts have three signatures on them - the Project Director - the President/CEO - the Chief Financial Officer. The Accounts Manager is an employee of Lutheran with both expertise in Peachtree accounting and Lutheran's accounting, bookkeeping methods, and requirements of CNCS.

Our sponsor, volunteer sites, local foundations and other granting organizations have been consistent with their generosity. Our Advisory Council will continue to be proactive in this area (grant writing/fund-raising) with the goal of keeping the project solvent, active and continues as the respected project it is.

Our continual publicity makes the community aware of RSVP efforts and successes. RSVP has secured funding, grants from both local and regional foundations to sustain our program. The Advisory Council consists of members who are knowledgeable and capable of securing outside funding making our project successful.

The Project Director and the Accounts Manager are well versed in the regulations in the RSVP handbook and the OMB circulars. If and when a change occurs, each staff member is required to sign and date alerts when appropriate.

Clearly defined staff positions, identification of staff assigned to the project and how these positions will ensure the accomplishment of the program objectives.

Grants have been carefully adhered to, deadlines met, reports completed properly and new issues incorporated into programming (Performance Measurement). Our track record with regard to execution of our federal grant is excellent, our sponsor is consistent with its support and our record-keeping is thorough. Lutheran has sponsored RSVP successfully since 1975 and FGP since 1983 - showing a legacy of successful federal grant management.

Tom Holt, President/CEO of Lutheran oversees our project's day-to-day operations and completes the

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required annual evaluation of the Project Director. Mr. Holt is the Certifying Official who approves and submits all grants.

The Project Director is responsible for both RSVP and FGP. The Project Director (50%) is assisted by a Project Coordinator (100%) who works directly with the volunteers and handles the recruitment, placement and oversight of the volunteers. All financial record keeping is accomplished by the Account Manager (10%), a Lutheran employee, to which RSVP is billed at an hourly rate.

The current Director has worked with seniors for 40 plus years. She has worked from a Nursing Assistant to a Volunteer Coordinator in her career and has worked with CNCS since 2001. The Project Director assures the project is funded and compliant and supervises staff. She monitors the budget, cooperating with the Account Manager and submits all reports as requested. The Project Director assures all account reconciliations and oversees all financial matters.

The Project Coordinator again joined our project in 2001 having previously worked 11 years with RSVP. Her acquired knowledge and wonderful interpersonal skills are an asset to our project. She recruits, manages, and assigns volunteers and records all volunteer activity. She is the point of contact for volunteers, volunteer sites and works with our many liaisons. The Station Roster and securing proper MOUs are included in her duties. Both Project Director and Coordinator perform public relations and communication duties. The Account Manager brings much experience with Peachtree software and accounting knowledge. Her job is accounts payable, calculates federal draw-downs, processing checks after the Director's approval and account assignment then securing the Project Director's signature, and financial book-keeping following Lutheran's Accounting Procedures. Since our local beginnings the project has had competent staff graciously serving seniors (and the community) and has kept pace with the changes in the operations of CNCS.

Demonstrates organization capacity to:

Develop and implement internal policies and operating procedures to provide governance and manage risk, such as accounting, personnel, management, and purchasing.

Manage capital assets such as facilities, equipment, and supplies.

Lutheran is a non-profit agency with a legacy of successful service dating back to 1886. It is situated on a 123 acre campus offering many services. Lutheran is home to a skilled nursing home, assisted living complex, medical model adult day care, senior housing units for the well elderly, and outpatient and inpatient rehabilitation services. In addition there is a children's home for emotionally disturbed youth. Therapeutic Foster care is available as well as a specialized school to serve the youth with special needs for those residing at the children's home and for the community. Lutheran also manages

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HUD apartment complexes in the Jamestown area. Lutheran manages homes for the developmentally disabled in the Rochester area. Lutheran supports a community outreach division which sponsors FGP, RSVP, and Senior Life Matters. Lutheran is an organization blessed with leadership which is insightful and benevolent and is well respected in the community. RSVP is a natural fit with the philosophy and practices of Lutheran.

Lutheran, being the expansive organization it is, has assured our project adequate space, resources, and equipment. Being housed within an office setting on the Lutheran campus affords RSVP the cost savings of sharing equipment when appropriate, access of in-house expertise, and affordable space rental.

Lutheran performs staff payroll functions, donates money, supplies and offers various forms of technical assistance. Health insurance, life insurance, workman's compensation, disability, and pension are all managed by Lutheran. Lutheran tracks and conducts all required inservices pertinent to our employment and other programs for self-improvement. Lutheran has detailed policies and procedures in the Employee handbook, available both in hard copy and via the intranet adhered to by all RSVP staff. RSVP is guided by the Human Resources Department of Lutheran - each staff member having a detailed job description reviewed yearly. Project purchases are processed and paid by RSVP, using Lutheran's tax exempt status and their purchasing discounts.

Demonstrates organizational infrastructure in the areas of robust financial management capacity and systems and past experience in managing federal grants.

Lutheran has detailed Accounting Policies and Procedures in place and a dynamic accounting department under the supervision of the Chief Financial Officer. The Chief Financial Officer arranges and schedules all financial audits and reviews as required. Lutheran has successfully been RSVP's sponsor since 1975 and FGP's sponsor since 1983 showing a legacy of compliant grant management. Project purchases are processed and paid by RSVP, adhering to Lutheran's Accounting policies. RSVP utilizes Lutheran's tax exempt status and purchasing power to attain appropriate discounts. Lutheran is RSVP's guiding agency. Housed on the Lutheran campus, we access the internet and utilize their phone system. Technical, maintenance, personnel, information system support is provided by their in-house experts.

Other

n/a

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

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n/a