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Executive Summary

An estimated 1,798 RSVP volunteers will serve the Baltimore County, MD community. Some of their activities will include food delivery, transportation, companionship, food distribution, food pantry support, and preventing elder abuse. The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures. At the end of the three-year grant, 1,830 individuals with disabilities will have increased social support; 2,750 individuals will experience increased food security; 150 K-12 students in mentoring programs will demonstrate improved academic engagement; 1,800 children will demonstrate gains in financial literacy skills; and 25 organizations will implement effective volunteer management practices. The CNCS federal investment of \$61,190 will be supplemented by \$65,601 in non-federal resources.

Strengthening Communities

Baltimore County is located in the geographic center of Maryland and is the third largest county (by population) in the state, with 817,455 people. Demographically, the County is a mix of urban and rural areas that spans 612 square miles with an additional 28 square miles of water. It is the largest territory surrounding Baltimore City.

Fifteen percent of the County's population (123,562 people) are age 65 and over. According to the 2012 American Community Survey conducted by the US Census Bureau, 9.9% of the 65 and older population in Baltimore County live 125% below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Additionally, 6.2% of this group receive Food Stamp/SNAP benefits, 90.5% rely on Social Security income, 3.8% are further impoverished, relying on Supplemental Social Security (SSI), and 32.6% live at home with a disability. Of the non-institutionalized individuals age 65 and older with a disability, 14.1% of them report having an independent living difficulty; this category includes those who responded affirmatively to the question "if due to a physical, mental, or emotional condition, they had difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping." Because the older adult population in Maryland is projected to grow to 1,104,757 by 2025, Baltimore County has a need to provide quality service to these individuals, allowing them to remain independent, in their homes, and out of long term care institutions as long as possible. RSVP volunteers will strengthen the community by engaging in the following service activities: companionship, food delivery, and transportation; as a result, older adults and individuals with disabilities will have increased social support.

The median household income for the County is \$62,543; the poverty rate, which accounts for the

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number of people (or families) who are below poverty, is 16.5% of the population. The need for access to and availability of nutritious food for families is apparent with a food insecurity rate of 12.4% (100,080 people), slightly under the 13.1% rate for the entire state of Maryland (Feeding America, 2014). Food insecure households often make trade-offs between important basic needs such as housing or medical bills, and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods. Research shows that hungry children have poor academic performance, emotional and behavioral disorders, drop out of school, and eventually obtain employment below the living wage (if employed at all). Because poverty can continue in a cyclic pattern if not stopped, there is an emergent need in Baltimore County for RSVP volunteers to strengthen communities by providing food distribution services and food pantry support. As a result, individuals in need or economically disadvantaged families will experience increased food security.

The Alzheimer's Association 2014 projections report 97,000 people in Maryland are diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or Dementia; 11% of people age 65 and older have the disease. Given Baltimore County's 65 and older population, it can be calculated that approximately 13,591 people 65 and older in the County are affected with the disease. Without knowledge of available health care resources and support, caregivers are unable to adequately cope with the disease and properly care for their loved ones. This presents an apparent need in Baltimore County to provide information on accessing health care resources and health benefits for those affected and their caregivers. Additionally, the majority of the 65 and older population in the County are eligible for Medicare but do not fully understand the health care benefit; therefore, are unable to access it or enroll in Medicare plans. This presents an unmet need for new and existing beneficiaries and their caregivers to receive health insurance benefits' counseling and guidance. RSVP volunteers engage in meaningful service to the Baltimore County community by staffing hotlines at the Baltimore County Department of Aging - State Health Insurance Program, providing over-the-phone Medicare counseling to clients so they can adequately understand their coverage, resolve health benefits issues, and access their health insurance. RSVP volunteers staff hotlines to provide real-time support and health care information to affected clients and families; thus, increasing access to care.

In 2012, the US Census Bureau reported 81,417 uninsured individuals in the County. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, as of April 2014, there were still 31,541 eligible individuals throughout the state that had not enrolled in a Health Insurance Exchange Plan, implying a need exists in the

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Baltimore County community to provide access to information on new health benefits under the Affordable Care Act. Given the 65 and older population that live at 125% below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL); 47.9% of this group live alone. Additionally, according to the Baltimore County 2013 Point in Time Survey, there are 919 homeless individuals in the County; many of whom are not connected to human service organizations and do not know how to access health benefits or other necessary resources. Collectively, these groups of county residents represent a vulnerable population that lack access to and/or a thorough knowledge of available health benefits. This data presents a need for RSVP volunteers to distribute information to supply vulnerable individuals and the community in general with health insurance, access, and benefits information; further, increasing access to care.

Throughout the County, there are 177 assisted living facilities and 47 long term care facilities, with a capacity to serve 9,141 residents. Many long term care facilities are at capacity, yet understaffed. As a result, they lack the resources to provide all residents with thorough health insurance, health care access, and health benefit programs information or resolve residents' rights issues. Additionally, many residents lack family support and are often left alone to maneuver the health insurance system. This presents an unmet need in the County for RSVP volunteers to prevent elder abuse, serve nursing home residents, and increase access to care, by distributing health insurance and benefits programs information.

The National Institutes of Health reports that an inactive lifestyle can cause older adults to decline in strength, balance, flexibility, and endurance, which are important for staying healthy and independent. However, further research suggests that exercise and physical activity can help older adults maintain or partly restore those vital areas. With the projected rise of the older adult population and their desire to remain active and independent as long as possible, a need to train and coach them on properly executing physical activities and exercises and healthy lifestyle behaviors exists in Baltimore County. RSVP volunteers will strengthen the community by coaching and training individuals and engaging their participation in health education programs.

In Baltimore County, 8.9% of the 18 and older population are veterans and 22.2% of the 65 and older population are veterans. This RSVP project will serve veterans and military families through that particular national service focus area by offering comfort and support to veterans who were wounded in action or killed in combat; as well as through income tax tutoring under the Economic Opportunity

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Focus Area. Additionally, veterans will be served in the Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area through companionship, transportation, food delivery, preventing elder abuse, distributing information, coaching, and training. More specifically, the project's sponsoring agency, Baltimore County Department of Aging enables RSVP volunteers (including veterans) to serves veterans through the following programs: The Home Team, Ombudsman, Senior Centers (Healthscope and Fitness Programs), State Health Insurance Program, and Congregate Meal Nutrition Sites. Veterans are a recognized and highly respected group of Baltimore County, that through service to and service with, yields a strong and thriving community.

Based on the stated community needs and demographics of the Baltimore County community, this RSVP project will primarily focus on the Healthy Futures initiative, with impact in areas of aging in place, obesity and food, and access to care. Baltimore County Department of Aging (BCDA) fully understands the importance of high quality data collection and management practices. The agency has gone to great measures to ensure a strong infrastructure is in place to measure the outputs and outcomes of the National Performance Measures for all CNCS focus areas indicated for this RSVP project. Through cultivating strong, working-relationships with our current community partnering organizations and RSVP work stations all parties involved understand the importance for collecting and measuring community impact data. We have been successful in collecting data and measuring community impact using the following tools: electronic surveys via Survey Monkey, monthly and quarterly activity logs, attendance sign in sheets, client logs, participant surveys, and telephone surveys. Because a large portion of this RSVP project's volunteer program are managed by our agency, we have the organizational capacity to ensure a process of checks and balance for collecting, measuring, and reporting client data (impact data) is followed. As a result, client data and community impact measurements are accurately reported, tabulated, and of high quality. In an effort to improve existing methods, a thorough analysis of the existing RSVP work stations current data collection methods was completed, with recommendations for improving where necessary. Going forward, we will revise existing RSVP work station Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to include a clause regarding the specific data to be reported, the selected data collection tool, and data submission deadlines. Lastly, BCDA has begun implementing the use of Volunteer Reporter (volunteer management software) to manage RSVP data for monitoring and reporting.

Recruitment and Development

To provide high quality volunteer assignments, BCDA works to select nonprofit organizations or other

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charitable entities as RSVP workstations, which not only meet needs within the County, but also hones in our Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area. When creating volunteer assignments, we let it be known to our partners and volunteers, that our main focus is on increasing access to health care, food security, and helping older adults remain active, safe, and out of long term care institutions. We provide challenging opportunities, skills development, and leadership possibilities to meet the interests of the volunteers and enhance their lives. We utilize current volunteers to train new volunteers. This grows the trainer through development, allows both new and seasoned volunteers to relate as peers, and most importantly, adds a new person with the valued skill set to fill a prime volunteer assignment and aid in filling an unmet community need. Volunteers also serve as team leaders, site coordinators, and liaisons to fellow volunteers at stations where there are a large number of volunteers. These individuals are trained by the RSVP Director and are effective in maintaining constant communication, ensuring data and volunteer hours reporting requirements are met, and training; thus, continuing to uphold our standard of high quality volunteer assignments.

At least monthly, we interview a different volunteer and give them the opportunity to share their volunteer experience in our Volunteer Spotlight news article. The article is featured in our quarterly RSVP Newsletter and the monthly BCDA Senior Digest newspaper, which reaches nearly 6,000 subscribers. These spotlight articles give the community, government officials, and other older adults the opportunity to see the impact RSVP volunteers are having on Baltimore County; and gives the volunteer an opportunity to reflect on their service.

To ensure volunteers know the importance of service in the Primary Focus Area or Other Focus Areas, we will begin to incorporate the service objective and output/outcome of service activities when volunteer assignments are given. This will keep all volunteers focused on impactful service to the Baltimore County community. BCDA has found great success using the train-the-trainer model, which is utilized to train RSVP volunteers in a particular skill set that they will use to complete a volunteer assignment and later train new fellow volunteers. Having experienced RSVP volunteers train new RSVP volunteers not only gives the new volunteer the base knowledge needed to be successful in their assignment, but the seasoned volunteer can pass along their tips and knowledge gained through hands-on experience.

According to the US Census Bureau, Baltimore County, MD has a population of 817,455 people; of

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which, 15% (123,562 people) are age 65 and over. The community is 64.7% White, 27.5% Black or African American, 5.7% Asian, with the following ethnicities accounting for the remaining percentages: American Indian, Native Hawaiian, or Hispanic. The median household income is \$62,543 and the poverty rate is 16.5%; 89.7% of people are high school graduates; 35.3% have bachelor degrees or higher; and 10.9% speak a language other than English at home. By utilizing our online volunteer database and interactive volunteer matching site, BCDA is able to reach a large pool of interested individuals and recruit a diverse group of RSVP volunteers. In addition, to reach all demographics, BCDA markets its RSVP volunteer opportunities through a wide variety of media including: Volunteer Match, the Department of Aging's volunteer web page, postings on Community Patch.com sites, articles in the Senior Digest newspaper, annual interview on Comcast TV (audience 325,000), pre-retirement group workshops, and the annual two day Baltimore County Department of Aging's Senior Expo (10,000 attendees). The RSVP Director holds recruitment activities at all senior housing buildings throughout the County; this allows BCDA to directly target older adult volunteers, including those with disabilities. To reach volunteers of varying educational levels and professional affiliations, BCDA seeks out various community organizations including: community/neighborhood associations, auxiliaries, and various professional, faith-based, and cultural organizations. Once these recruitment efforts are saturated, word-of-mouth referrals from existing volunteers keeps our diverse volunteer pool consistent.

A recognition event is held each spring where 1,200 guests are invited to a seated luncheon with live entertainment and dancing to honor RSVP volunteers in Baltimore County. Several awards are given during the program to include: milestone years of RSVP service awards, RSVP Volunteer of the Year, RSVP Non-profit Work Station of the year, and the popular RSVP Champion Awards highlighting an exemplary RSVP volunteer's service in each of the CNCS Focus Areas (healthy futures, veterans and military families, disaster services, environmental stewardship, economic opportunity, and education). This recognition event is attended by the County Executive and County Council, U.S. Senators and Representatives, State officials, BCDA staff, and other community supporters. During National Volunteer Week, Baltimore County RSVP hosts a dessert reception at the main office for RSVP volunteers as well as "appreciation stations" at various locations in the county where RSVP volunteers will be able to receive a 15 minute chair massage. A local restaurant also gives RSVP volunteers 10% off their dinner purchase for a "volunteer appreciation night."

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From the initial contact with a potential volunteer, through successful placement, and the beginning of service BCDA exercises superior customer service and open communication to all individuals; thus, ensuring a smooth and enjoyable volunteer experience. Additionally, we instill in our volunteers the importance of local community service, their value and impact, and the point of joining a larger network of senior volunteers, making an impact throughout the country. During orientation, we allow volunteers the opportunity to network with their peers, which builds up camaraderie and pride in the program as well themselves as RSVP volunteers. As a result, it affords them the opportunity to become ambassadors of the Baltimore County RSVP program as well as Senior Corps; these components are all instrumental in retaining our volunteers. Because volunteerism is not mandatory and often times not acknowledged through monetary compensation, BCDA strives to show appreciation for the heartfelt service of all volunteers, make appropriate volunteer placements, and make meaningful use of one's skill set as key components to volunteer retention.

Program Management

Once a MOU is signed to enroll a new nonprofit organization as a RSVP workstation, a one-on-one orientation is held with volunteer station coordinators to review all RSVP program requirements and regulations, CNCS guidelines, and general Baltimore County RSVP programmatic information. The station coordinator receives the RSVP Workstation Coordinator Manual which specifically outlines all program regulations, with great emphasis on prohibited activities. This information is also reiterated by the Project Director. The Project Director also gives the station coordinator verbal guidance on preventing and identifying prohibited activities. To further manage current volunteer stations, the Project Director maintains open and consistent communication with station coordinators. By maintaining contact no less than monthly, via email correspondence, conference calls, quarterly reporting reminders, and conducting annual site visits, station coordinators develop a highly functioning relationship with the RSVP team. Additionally, the Project Director hosts at least 2 trainings each year for volunteer management specific to RSVP that focuses on data reporting, outcomes measuring, and new program requirements; all work station coordinators and potential partnering workstations are asked to attend.

RSVP volunteer workstations are developed based on the needs of the Baltimore County community in alignment with the Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area, first; and Other Focus Areas, second; and with minimal to no new stations developed in Other Community Priorities. Because BCDA as an agency serves older adults and individuals with disabilities through a number of volunteer programs

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that are currently served by RSVP volunteers, oversight of volunteer service activities is managed in-house by the specific Program Managers. All BCDA Program Managers who utilize RSVP volunteers are aware of RSVP program regulations, requirements, and the scope and objective of the assigned service activities, which are consistently reiterated to volunteers. BCDA recognizes the importance of knowing the demographics of those we serve and the expected outcomes of providing impactful service to the community. These guiding principles direct daily service activities and are introduced in the initial RSVP volunteer orientation and revisited during volunteer trainings and in-services.

The Focus Areas, service objectives, and performance measures outlined by CNCS are very representative of the needs of the Baltimore County community. To address changing community needs in Baltimore County, BCDA will continue to seek and develop volunteer assignments that align with CNCS Focus Areas, with preference given to those in the Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area. The agency will do all possible to minimize disruption to current volunteers in the event a station should be graduated. If a station should in fact be graduated, BCDA will give volunteers the opportunity to engage in Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area service activities or connect them with other volunteer opportunities in the community that are not supported by RSVP or CNCS.

BCDA is an agency whose track record of excellence and ability to serve older adults and their families in the County depends upon the successful management of a variety of agency-based volunteer programs supported by RSVP volunteers. There are 290 RSVP volunteers serving in Healthy Future related volunteer roles at senior centers and impacting the health, wellness, and independence of the 20,379 seniors attending the programming at 20 centers. Senior Centers are managed and operated by BCDA and have been nationally recognized for their assortment of excellent program offerings.

Annually, the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) RSVP volunteers provide Medicare information and assistance to 3,000 consumers. Home Team RSVP volunteers assist homebound seniors to live independently by providing weekly errand running, friendly visiting (companionship), transportation, and/or escort services. From April 2013- April 2014, 320 institutionalized older adults were visited and comforted by RSVP volunteers. Friendly visits and group activities attributed to an increase in enthusiasm, diminished depression, and positive improvements in social engagement. Other BCDA volunteer activities include food delivery, food distribution, food pantry support, and preventing elder abuse, which are also served by RSVP volunteers. The Ombudsman Program trains

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and oversees RSVP volunteers that distribute information on health care access and benefits as well as advocate for residents' rights; 12 RSVP volunteers are serving in this capacity. The shortage of staff in nursing homes will lead to a greater need for more RSVP Ombudsman volunteers to serve these vulnerable individuals. Also during the April 2013- April 2014 period, RSVP volunteers serving at food pantries assisted in providing food to 4,013 individuals. Approximately 3,852 (96%), of the individuals reported that the food obtained helped to prevent hunger. The successes of these programs are attributed to the strong leadership of the agency and the input and direction of RSVP. The agency has successfully implemented output/outcome-based programs based on the CNCS requirement. As a sponsoring agency, with a human services focus, our focus naturally aligns with the outcomes of CNCS in the Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area.

The RSVP Project Director is responsible for ensuring compliance with all RSVP federal regulations. The Project Director is familiar with all federal regulations and stays abreast of any program changes or requirements through attending CNCS sponsored trainings, webinars, and frequently checking the CNCS site. The Baltimore County RSVP Advisory Council is already established and assists with ensuring all goals and objectives for the Baltimore County RSVP program are met in a high quality manner. RSVP volunteer eligibility requirements are indicated through questions on the RSVP Volunteer Application. New volunteers are screened through the application process and only those volunteers that are found eligible for service are invited to attend the RSVP Volunteer Orientation. The RSVP Project Director is responsible for ensuring a current MOU is on file with new and existing RSVP volunteer stations. Volunteer Reporter tracks date of MOU signature and renewal dates. The Project Director runs this report quarterly and takes action where necessary. The RSVP Project Director facilitates initial signatures or renewals with the work station coordinators. Volunteers are not assigned to workstations without current MOUs on file.

Organizational Capability

Baltimore County Department of Aging (BCDA) has been a sponsor of RSVP since the 1970s. BCDA strives to develop and administer programs, with extensive use of volunteers that support older adults in their efforts to remain healthy, active and independent; while, focusing on intergenerational programming with implications in areas of the Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area. Day-to-day RSVP programmatic oversight is provided by the RSVP Project Director who is accountable to BCDA's Deputy Director. Weekly meetings are held between the Project Director and Deputy Director to review programmatic developments and federal regulation updates; thus, continuously ensuring the

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Baltimore County RSVP program remains in compliance with all federal requirements and regulations. Additionally, the Project Director meets with the fiscal officer to ensure accurate accounting of all monetary resources. These regular meetings between all BCDA RSVP key players ensure efficient and effective use of available resources.

The key member of the RSVP staff is the RSVP Project Director, who is responsible for the overall administration and management of the RSVP grant. The Project Director is also instrumental in new program development and ensures all aspects of Baltimore County RSVP meet federal requirements and regulations. By maintaining consistent communication with the CNCS State Program Officer and other Project Directors from neighboring jurisdictions the Project Director has developed a support network to discuss and review new program requirements, updates from OMB circulars, and implement changes as needed. Tonee Lawson has filled this position for Baltimore County since August 2012 and brings a wealth of knowledge in developing and managing youth leadership programs for non-profit organizations, grant management, human services case management, volunteer management, and event planning to her role. Tonee is supervised by Laura Riley, Division Chief of Administrative and Support Services and Deputy Director of the Baltimore County Department of Aging. BCDA hired a Towson University student intern for RSVP in January 2013 whose role was to support the Project Director by assisting with program recruitment, marketing, and volunteer placements. The intern, Horiol Poggy later transitioned to a paid staff position with RSVP, working as a Program Assistant. He is a valuable asset to the team, using his Healthcare Administration bachelor's degree to provide support in the Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area regarding the access to care objective, volunteer assignments, ensuring that output/outcome data is accurately measured and reported, and community needs are thoroughly analyzed. He continues to assist with program recruitment, marketing, and volunteer placement. The RSVP Project Director and Program Assistant work in tandem to ensure high levels of achievement for the Baltimore County RSVP program.

BCDA provides office space for the RSVP program, general office and IT support, and all equipment. Extensive administrative policies and procedures cover all facets of Baltimore County's operations. To manage and mitigate risks, policies are reviewed by employees during orientation, staff meetings, and are made available in print as well as electronically through the intranet. These existing policies and procedures cover the purchase of equipment and supplies, local and long distance travel, staff training,

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personnel management, and staff role development. Facilities are managed and maintained by Property Management. Supplies are purchased under general procurement procedures. Internal personnel and staffing matters are handled with BCDA's Personnel Officer who is the liaison to Baltimore County's Department of Human Resources; BCDA accounting matters are handled with the agency's Fiscal Office, lead by the Fiscal Officer, and is accountable to Baltimore County's Office of Budget and Finance.

Oversight of all BCDA fiscal matters, whether referring to County General Funds or funds from federal, state or local grants are managed by the BCDA's Fiscal Office, which is ultimately accountable to the County's Office of Budget and Finance. BCDA's Fiscal Staff has over 35 years of experience in federal grant management and currently oversees multiple federal grants. Funds and budgets are reviewed quarterly to ensure compliance and budgetary limitations are met.

Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A