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Executive Summary

ShareCare Faith In Action, a non-sectarian nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide compassionate and practical services to the elderly and those with special needs is proposing to continue as the provider of RSVP services in Lehigh, Northampton and Carbon Counties in Pennsylvania . An estimated 420 RSVP volunteers will serve through a network of at least 85 stations which will offer a broad base of service opportunities for persons 55 and older.

Service Categories:Our program will be directing its attention to Healthy Futures as its Primary Focus Area. This includes Aging In Place by supporting those services that help keep seniors safely living in the home of their choice for as long as possible, Access To Care which will include access to benefits and health insurance information, Obesity and Food will include Food Distribution by providing healthy meals at area Soup Kitchens as well as Food Pantry Support.

Our secondary Focus Areas will be Disaster Services including responding and assisting with recovery, Capacity Building by assisting area non-profits to leverage additional resources. In Education RSVP volunteers will help elementary students improve math and reading skills. We will also engage volunteers in opportunities that provide services to veterans, active military and their families.

Community Needs Addressed: Seniors needing assistance to age-in-place; food insecure residents who rely on help from food pantries and soup kitchens; consumers needing education about health insurance and benefits; and recovery; at risk elementary students needing mentoring/tutoring to improve math and/or reading skills and read at grade level; providing services and service opportunities to veterans, military and their families; area non-profits needing help leveraging resources to keep pace with increased demands for services.

Methodologies: We will partner with agencies implementing a best practice and/or adhering to research-based methods to achieve their goals. Examples of these include: United Way agencies using Results Based Accountability.

Service Activities to address each Focus Area are outlined in the Work Plans. For example, Food Delivery through the five home-delivered meals programs that serve individuals in three counties.

Outcomes: Outcomes related to each Focus Area are outlined in the Work Plans. As examples: Aging in Place ¿ RSVP members serving as volunteers in the community programs that provide services such as transportation, meal delivery, grocery shopping assistance, and other in-home supports will help meet the growing demands for assistance so increased numbers of our area¿s seniors are able to safely age-in-place.

The CNCS federal investment of \$147,000 will be supplemented by \$63,668 in local support.

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Strengthening Communities

RSVP of Lehigh, Northampton and Carbon Counties, sponsored by ShareCare Faith in Action, serves three counties in the eastern portion of Pennsylvania. Lehigh and Northampton Counties make up the Lehigh Valley which includes the cities of Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton. Two-thirds of the Lehigh Valley is rural and suburban. The three counties together are often referred to as the Greater Lehigh Valley. It is the third most populous region of Pennsylvania.

Given the nature of the area, specialized transportation needs exceed availability, making services to the homebound or those lacking reliable transportation one of the region's priorities in every study done since 2001 by the Lehigh Valley Alliance on Aging (newly renamed United Way Alliance on Aging - UWAA).

The Alliance on Aging is a volunteer organization convened by United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley to address the needs of older adults. RSVP has been an active member of the Alliance on Aging's Steering Committee since 2001. UWAA convenes with over 100 for-profit, non-profit and government entities throughout the Lehigh Valley to ensure seniors stay healthy at home and in 2014 was nationally recognized as the Premier Collective Impact Movement for Healthy Aging in the United Way Worldwide network.

When the United Way became aware of the notice of funding opportunity in 2012 to reestablish an RSVP in this region their Manager of Older Adults and Basic Needs Investments convened the Executive Directors of the Area Agencies on Aging, along with United Way partner agencies that serve older adults and key United Way volunteers. These stakeholders continue to be engaged as partners and Stations and invited to provide representatives/input for the Community Advisory Committee. Sixteen (16%), or nearly 110,000 individuals in the region are 65 and older; 38% of whom live with a disability significant enough to require assistance. According to research by AARP, nearly 90% of seniors want to stay in their own homes as they age, however, like most Americans, seniors in our region live in isolated, detached, single family homes in suburban or rural neighborhoods without access to or with limited access to transportation services, social connectivity and supportive services. According to the 2014 Executive Summary of the United States of Aging Survey, we can expect the needs of seniors trying to age-in-place to increase as 48% of socially isolated individuals surveyed expected they would be needing transportation assistance within the next 10 years and 40% of the respondents who live alone said they would turn to community programs if they could no longer care for themselves.

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During the process to research best practices to identify and launch a signature program of the UWAA to better serve the needs of our older adult population, the United Way determined there are nearly 5,000 unsupported, dependent seniors living at home in the Lehigh Valley. These seniors need services but are not receiving support from paid services, non-profit services, government or family/friends. In 2014 the United Way's Alliance on Aging began a Gatekeepers Program as a collective community approach to connecting these at-risk seniors to appropriate services. RSVP members serving as volunteers in the community programs that provide services such as: transportation, meal delivery, grocery shopping assistance, visitation and care calls, respite, and light chores can help meet the demands for in-home supports of our area's seniors and others living with disabilities and increase the number of area seniors who are able to safely age-in-place.

The Elder Economic Security Index for Pennsylvania puts the number of older adults needing assistance higher than the 10% poverty rate. According to the Index, approximately 30% live at or below the level of economic self-sufficiency and require assistance paying for prescriptions, utilities and meeting other basic needs. The National Council on Aging determined there are over 30 million dollars in benefits that go unclaimed each year in our region. RSVP volunteers, trained as Benefits Ambassadors, can help area seniors who are not receiving all of the public and private benefits for which they are eligible identify and access those benefits helping to improve their economic security. People of all ages in our region have been affected by recent hard economic times to the most basic level of human need - food for themselves and their families. The issue of food insecurity greatly impacts the Lehigh Valley. The 2014 Farm Bill implies an estimated \$65 per family - every month - cut on food subsidies in this region. According to the Food Research and Action Center, in two of our three Congressional Districts - Districts #11 and #15 - the percentage of food hardship is higher than the national average of 14.5 % of Americans. In District #17 it is just slightly lower than the national average with nearly 14% reporting food hardship.

Of those residents that are food insecure - meaning they are unable to consistently access nutritious and adequate amounts of food necessary for a healthy life - 54% are above the 180% of the poverty line making them ineligible for public benefits of any kind. Additionally, eight food deserts - geographic locations with limited access to nutritious food - have been designated by the US Department of Agriculture in the Lehigh Valley. Reducing the number of people in the Lehigh Valley who are food insecure by 50% by 2022 is designated as a community goal by the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley and to that end it has made investments in Food Pantries certified by Second Harvest in the "Choice model" , Soup Kitchens that are in compliance with food safety inspections,

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and home-delivered meals programs.

Second Harvest Food Bank of the Lehigh Valley and NE PA, located in Allentown, is helping thousands of people who are struggling to put food on the table throughout a six-county service area. In 2012, Second Harvest distributed 6.38 million pounds of food to its network of over 200 member agencies. Member agencies are serving over 69,000 people each month. RSVP volunteers can assist in the main warehouse, the satellite warehouse for special projects or in any of Second Harvests' member agency Food Pantries and Soup Kitchens located in our three-county area.

Over 50,000 veterans and their families live and work in the Lehigh Valley. While two veteran's clinics serve this area, there is all too often a gap between needs and available services. The Lehigh Valley Military Affairs Council (LVMAC), a local nonprofit, was founded in 2003 by a group of concerned veterans to address local problems by harnessing existing resources or creating new ones. The LVMAC has a number of initiatives conducted by member agencies that need volunteers to serve veterans, active military and their families, for example: Stand Downs conducted by the Valor Clinic Foundation, Operation Healing Waters conducted by a local Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and the Veterans Mentor Program of the Lehigh County District Attorney's office. RSVP is a member agency of LVMAC.

The economic downturn affected all 22 public school districts in the three counties - not only in terms of lost tax revenue, but also increased demand for additional support services. Schools have seen an increase in the percentage of students eligible for reduced price lunches. The United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley also funds designated Impact areas related to children and families. These include 10 Community Schools, all public elementary schools exhibiting high poverty rates and poor academic achievement in Bethlehem, Allentown Easton and Bangor. Within the various school districts, the United Way Community Schools and other initiatives of the United Way member agencies there are many needs and opportunities for volunteers to work with children, youth and their families as mentors, tutors, readers and members of the Literacy Corps.

In 2008, United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley brought Results Based Accountability (RBA) to the community. As a general rule, RBA asks three questions: 1) How much did we do? -quantity measures describe the number of customers and the depth of program engagement. 2) How well did we do it? - quality measures describe program effectiveness. 3) Is anyone better off? - results measures demonstrate improved performance or other calculated change among service recipients. The majority of the agencies that will serve as RSVP Stations in the Focus Areas, including the Primary Focus Area of Healthy Futures, will be United Way partner agencies and, as such, are

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required to collect and report data using Results Based Accountability. This will also provide the format we can use to collect data from those agencies that are not United Way Partner agencies. Since numerous studies consistently prove the health benefits of volunteering on seniors, RSVP will meet critical community needs and also play an active role in the 'successful aging process' which is a priority of the United Way's Alliance on Aging.

Recruitment and Development

ShareCare's RSVP Volunteer Recruitment Plan includes the following strategies:

Continue to build on RSVPs Outreach Database that includes contact information for: elected officials; places of worship; senior groups, clubs and AARP Chapters; companies that have retiree groups; Active Adult Communities; senior centers and senior housing; veteran-serving organizations; service and cultural organizations.

Contact Senior Clubs, Retiree Groups, Service Organizations and Veteran-serving Organizations to schedule a presentation about RSVP, local community needs and the difference volunteers can and do make in addressing these needs for one of their meetings.

Expand RSVP website to include the feature of online enrollment. Utilize the Web Assistant feature of Volunteer Reporter software so hours can be reported online and current Volunteer Opportunities can be posted.

Prepare and submit articles and ads for Lifestyles over 50 Monthly Magazine and East Penn Press Publications and articles for other no-cost print media.

Invite key community leaders to participate in RSVP's Community Advisory Committee. Utilize the connections and expertise of interested committee members to form a Recruiting Task Force and also enlist the services of RSVP volunteers as 'program ambassadors and recruiters'. Provide training, materials and assignments for members of the Recruiting/Outreach Task Force so they can assist RSVP staff and 'consultants' (contracted outreach/recruitment specialists) in mobilizing additional senior volunteers.

Contact the local offices of 21 Legislators and provide RSVP brochures and materials. Register for all upcoming Legislative Senior Fairs. Provide information about RSVP and Volunteer Opportunities electronically to be included in their constituent newsletters.

Distribute announcements through the networks of the Area Agencies on Aging, LINK, United Way partners, Volunteer Center, Interagency Council, United Way Alliance on Aging and Society of Volunteer Administrators, AARP, and ShareCare Faith in Action partners. Request a link to the RSVP website on each agency's website.

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Develop several table top displays and supplemental materials for Senior Fairs and Health Expos.

Create a variety of recruitment items -- flyers, bookmarks, posters, postcards, ads -- with messaging for a variety of audiences and cohorts.

Maintain RSVP membership in the Lehigh Valley Military Affairs Council, the Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley, the Society of Volunteer Administrators, Community Exchange Time Bank and Carbon County Interagency Council and provide information about RSVP and Volunteer Opportunities to be distributed electronically through their networks.

Maintain an RSVP seat on the United Way Alliance on Aging's Steering Committee.

Determine which assignments / initiatives should be high-lighted and post volunteer opportunities on Volunteer Recruitment websites and submit for inclusion in volunteer columns.

Customize and utilize the Senior Corps of PA and national brochures to increase program awareness and attract new members.

Provide bulletin announcements to places of worship. Request an opportunity to address their congregation or council.

Contact major area health networks to request inclusion of an article and on-going information in their healthy living publications.

In order to develop a quality program with well-developed volunteer assignments ShareCare will ensure that a signed Memorandum of Understanding is in place before volunteers are placed at a Station. The Memorandum will identify project requirements and mutual responsibilities and be the basis for the working relationship between the Station and ShareCare/RSVP.

The process of setting up any RSVP Station will include securing copies of clearly defined volunteer assignments (job descriptions) to be used in the recruiting/interview/placement process.

All Stations will be provided with a Station Handbook and Request for RSVP Volunteer forms, which include dates and times for Volunteer Training, so that new opportunities/needs can be easily shared with the RSVP Office, Staff and prospective volunteer.

On-going contact with RSVP Stations and partners will ensure we have the most up-to-date information about their on-going and emerging needs.

RSVP will also serve as a resource to Coordinators of Volunteer Programs who are often one-person human resource departments. RSVP can access and share a vast array of best practices and national resources to assist Stations developing job descriptions and new roles for volunteers, training materials and assessment tools.

Making the right placement is key to volunteer retention. RSVP staff will maintain an up-to-date

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listing and job descriptions of all volunteer opportunities. Staff will have first-hand knowledge of the Stations and conduct thorough interviews to get a clear understanding of the volunteers' interests, time, and talents. All RSVP staff will work to ensure satisfaction with both Station and assignment. We are committed to work with those agencies that serve the Spanish-speaking clients to try to build a more diverse corps of volunteers. The ShareCare Faith In Action materials are already available in Spanish, as is the BenefitsCheckUp screening tool.

The ShareCare Faith in Action model relies on a leader or co-leaders for each community of faith team and that model can be applied to provide leadership roles for community volunteers from a particular cohort, community, group, or geographic area. There will be assignments where volunteers from various backgrounds serve together because they have a similar interest - such as the environment, working with children, helping the elderly or alleviating hunger.

Years of working with people have taught us all the importance of a simple "Thank You" and they are given in many forms because it is important to recognize the differences in people and what they value. Recognition for RSVP members will include: pins, notes, Birthday postcards, small tokens of appreciation or refreshments and trainings/meetings, invitations to special trainings and volunteer enrichments. Recognition also includes providing the supplies and equipment needed to complete the job the volunteer is being asked to do, spotlighting the work done by volunteers on RSVPs website and Facebook page, and nominating volunteers for local, state and national awards. Our plans include all of these and more, plus one large annual recognition. This annual event is the only time many of the RSVP members realize they are a part of something much bigger than themselves and confirms that together they can make a difference.

Program Management

To ensure effective program management there will be adequate staffing of RSVP. This will include a full-time Project Director and three part-time Coordinators and one contracted Recruiting Specialist. Each Coordinator or Recruiting Specialist will have oversight of approximately 100 - 125 volunteers and 25 Stations. Adequate staffing will make it possible to do regular site visits, follow-up on placements of volunteers, maintain on-going contact with site supervisors and volunteers, follow-up on timesheets, new opportunities and reports.

ShareCare/RSVP will maintain community contacts, connections and partners which will keep them apprised of current and emerging needs, agency waiting lists, underserved areas or populations, reduced or flat funding and how any economic downturn affects an increased need for services.

ShareCare/RSVP will rely on the most current needs assessments, data collected and reports produced

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by such groups as: the United Way Alliance on Aging (UWAA) which regularly publishes Status Updates on the state of older adults in the Lehigh Valley, the Lehigh Valley Military Affairs Council, AARP and the Lehigh Valley Regional Consortium (LVRC). Through the collection and analysis of data, the LVRC assists government officials, community businesses and, not-for-profit organizations in their work and encourages broad participation and dialogue about quality of life issues in our region.

RSVP will also maintain a strong connection to the Volunteer Center of the Greater Lehigh Valley which serves 400+ non-profits in the Lehigh Valley and Carbon County's Interagency Council where an additional 40 agencies are providing social services in Carbon County.

These connections will help RSVP identify and establish working relationships with those agencies and organizations that are providing services in the areas that are identified by community data collection and needs assessments and coincide with the focus areas of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

RSVP will initiate contact with all stations that have assignments in the Focus Areas and attempt to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding with those agencies, organizations or programs that are providing services that address one or more identified community need (focus area) setting them up as RSVP Stations. Consideration will be given to those programs, agencies and organizations that are implementing a best practice and/or adhering to research-based methods to achieve their goals; are collecting and reporting their results (outcomes) and willing to share those with RSVP; demonstrate an ability and/or willingness to work effectively with senior volunteers.

RSVP will work with those Stations to gather all existing Volunteer Job Descriptions and/or develop additional roles for volunteers, and help to mobilize senior volunteers to assist each Station in achieving its goals.

When a non-profit asks to be set up as an RSVP Station the first step will be to research the agency by visiting the program website if one exists.

An initial site visit is set up by the RSVP Coordinator or Director. The initial site visit includes gathering information about the Station's mission, copies of brochures, flyers, and a review of all job descriptions so RSVP staff and members have a clear understanding of what is required to fill each position. The visit also includes assessing if the Station has assignments and accommodations for persons with disabilities. This information is stored in the RSVP Station database making it easy to identify those sites that have placements for persons with varying abilities. Each Station will receive a Station and Volunteer Handbook and blank Volunteer Request forms, with space to indicate what the Station

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expects the volunteer to accomplish and how the volunteer's activity will help the agency meet its goals. These are reviewed on the initial visit with the person designated on the MoU as the one who will be working with RSVP.

RSVP Coordinators will complete reports designed to capture the progress in achieving the goals as outlined in the grant. The Project Director will comply with all sponsor guidelines by submitting all necessary reports on Project progress. Members of the Community Advisory Committee will be kept apprised of Project activities and progress at Committee meetings, via emails and phone contacts. Members of the Community Advisory Committee will be encouraged to make site visits and asked to help complete a Project assessment.

Collaborating with RSVP will bring added resources to those Stations that are struggling to: keep pace with increased demands; trying to eliminate waiting lists for their services; expand into underserved areas; meet emerging or unmet needs. Those RSVP resources include: expertise and funding to recruit, screen, insure, mobilize, recognize and place into meaningful volunteer assignments persons 55 and older-- a majority of whom state they want to volunteer in their community but may need help identifying where they are needed and how best to utilize their time and talents in areas of greatest need.

RSVPs sponsoring agency - ShareCare Faith in Action - has over twenty three years experience recruiting, training, screening and managing volunteers from faith communities and the community at large. In those twenty three years of operation ShareCare has tripled the number of individuals served annually, built partnerships with 18 congregations and trained 300+ volunteers capable of working with the elderly and persons with disabilities. Most of the persons receiving support from ShareCare volunteers are 60 years of age or older and require in-home supports to be able to remain living safely in the home of their choice and also remain connected to the community. In order to remain a United Way funded agency ShareCare Faith In Action is required to maintain data and report outcomes that are consistent with the Healthy Futures Aging in Place Focus Area.

ShareCare Faith in Action has experience as the sponsoring agency of RSVP in Lehigh, Northampton and Carbon Counties since 2012.

Organizational Capability

ShareCare Faith in Action has been serving older adults in Lehigh and Northampton Counties since 1991 when its first volunteers began providing in-home respite care. The agency expanded its mission and services in 1996 to include transportation, visitation, and household chores. This expansion resulted in the name-change to ShareCare Faith in Action. ShareCare Faith in Action follows the Faith

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in Action Model - a national volunteer caregiving initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Local Faith In Action programs bring together volunteers from many faiths and the community at large to work together to care for their neighbors who have long-term health needs. ShareCare Faith in Action is part of the National Volunteer Caregiving Network, a membership network of local community volunteer caregiving programs and regional and state collaboratives.

The RSVP Director reports ShareCare Faith in Action's Executive Director who has a BA and 30 years' experience working with special populations. The current RSVP Project Director, who has direct responsibility for the RSVP staff of experienced part-time Coordinators, has over 20 years' experience as a Director of RSVP.

The ShareCare Faith in Action Accountant uses QuickBooks Accounting Software to manage all agency finances, including grants for the last four years from Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority and the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley. For an organization to become United Way qualified as a partner agency eligible for funding, they must submit a Qualification Application. The process is rigorous and consists of completing an 18-point application, requiring access to information from an organization's 990, budget, strategic plan, Board of Directors etc. Organizations are also required to complete a Qualification Renewal on a yearly basis. The criterion to complete the United Way qualifications contain the essential legal, governance, financial and quality requirements to ensure a United Way investment would be financially protected from risk and used to the greatest benefit to the community. As a United Way partner agency, ShareCare Faith in Action is required to prepare and submit an annual Results-Based Accountability Report addressing all performance measures.

In April 2007, ShareCare Faith in Action received the United Way Community Partnership Award. ShareCare Faith in Action has over twenty three years' experience recruiting, training, screening and managing volunteers from faith communities and the community at large. Most of the persons receiving care from ShareCare volunteers are 60 years of age or older. In those twenty three years of operation we have tripled the number of individuals served annually, built partnerships with 18 congregations and trained 300+ volunteers capable of working with the target population. ShareCare Faith in Action also partnered with AARP in a volunteer recruitment initiative. In 2005, the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley was awarded a Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) Next Generation grant to implement a two-year program that met the following criteria: the project needed to engage the 'next generation' of senior volunteers, involve communities of faith and be replicable. ShareCare Faith in Action, RSVP and Jewish Family Service of the Lehigh Valley

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collaborated with the United Way to develop and implement the Benefits Ambassador Program. When RSVP of Lehigh, Northampton and Carbon Counties was awarded a CNCS PNS grant in June of 2010, ShareCare Faith in Action was a key partner providing high-impact assignments for RSVP volunteers as well as data needed to complete RSVP reports. Because of the long-standing working relationship between ShareCare Faith in Action and the RSVP project, ShareCare Faith in Action's Board members are also very familiar with and supportive of RSVP.

ShareCare Faith in Action works with numerous community partners, including AARP, Jewish Family Service of the Lehigh Valley, the Volunteer Center of the Greater Lehigh Valley and the stakeholders in the United Way Alliance on Aging. ShareCare Faith in Action has secured space to house the Main Office of RSVP and provides administrative support. Several Community Partners have been willing to provide office space for county coordinators. Lehigh County Aging and Adult Service and Northampton and Carbon County Area Agencies on Aging support the RSVP project in their service area with both Lehigh County Aging and Adult Services and Northampton County Area Agency on Aging providing financial support.

All ShareCare Faith in Action staff, including RSVP staff, have clearly defined job descriptions and adhere to policies and procedures, including travel policies, outlined in the Staff Policies and Procedures Manual. ShareCare Faith in Action follows Faith in Action Tools for Success to Maintain Sustainability and currently utilizes CareWorks to track all the volunteer activities. Within the next six months ShareCare Faith in Action will begin utilizing the Assisted Rides Program to manage their volunteers and program.

ShareCare Faith in Action staff and Board of Directors are committed to continuous quality improvement. The staff routinely reviews office procedures; volunteers and clients complete customer annual satisfaction surveys; the Volunteer Caregivers Committee (a standing committee of the Board of Directors) oversees programs and services to achieve the Strategic Planning objectives established by the Board.

Other

NA

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

NA