

Narratives

Executive Summary

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) and its Area Agency on Aging has operated the Escambia County, Alabama RSVP for nine years and seeks to add Baldwin County as a new service area. SARPC's current RSVP grant was awarded in a competitive cycle and the work plans reflect the CNCS Strategic Plan, focus areas and performance measures, as does the work plans proposed for Baldwin County. SARPC estimates 117 unduplicated volunteers will serve in Baldwin County. The primary focus area for RSVP volunteer opportunities is Health Futures which includes 1) volunteering at food pantries to assist with food distribution and collection to address assisting individuals with access to food resources; 2) providing training to older adults for evidence based health promotion programs such as A Matter of Balance fall prevention and the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program; and 3) by providing RSVP volunteers trained through the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) to help older persons and persons with disabilities with access to care through accessing available insurance programs and benefits, extra help, and medications. Other focus areas include veterans, disasters and financial literacy. Veterans who are of advanced age or disabled and residing in the local William F. Green State Veterans Home in Baldwin County or in the other 12 nursing facilities or assisted living facilities will be visited to ensure their residents rights and quality care. RSVP volunteers will become trained Long Term Care Ombudsman to provide this services through SARPC's Ombudsman program. RSVP volunteers will assist this coastal community with a history of hurricanes, the Gulf Oil Spill, and flooding with preparedness activities with training provided through a partnership with the American Red Cross and the Area Agency on Aging. Tax assistance will be provided by trained RSVP volunteers through SARPC's IRS Tax Counseling for the Elderly Program. Other community needs include a variety of volunteer opportunities to help with multiple special events, festivals, and fundraisers held in the County and by assisting at senior nutrition centers to help seniors receive healthy foods, socialization and recreation to keep them independent. As SARPC is a current grantee of the Escambia County RSVP program, if awarded funding for Baldwin County, a new service area, SARPC will work towards combining these programs with one RSVP Director overseeing Baldwin and Escambia Counties and to employ a Volunteer Coordinator in each county. The submitted budget with this application requests federal assistance with the cost of half of the RSVP Director's salary and for one volunteer coordinator to serve Baldwin County, and includes required local cash match.

Strengthening Communities

Narratives

Describe community, demonstrate through both narrative & work plans community need(s) identified in primary Focus Area exist in geographic service area

Baldwin County, Alabama was established in 1809, and it is the largest county east of the Mississippi River. It was one of two of Alabama's coastal counties and is located on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico and Mobile Bay, bordered on the West by Mobile County, Alabama, on the Northeast by Escambia County, Alabama, and on the East by Escambia County, Florida. The County has a total area of 2,027 square miles, of this 1,596 square miles is land and 431 square miles is water. The population density is 114 persons per square mile. Because of the large land area, Baldwin County has six diverse regions: North, Eastern Shore, Central, South, Southwest and East. While the county has fourteen incorporated municipalities, ranging in size & density, Baldwin County is considered a primary rural county. The thirteen municipalities include Bay Minette, Silverhill, Summerdale, Daphne, Foley, Magnolia Springs, Robertsedale, Spanish Fort, Fairhope, Gulf Shores, Orange Beach, and Perdido Beach. Baldwin County remains a popular destination for visitors year round because of beautiful beaches, recreational opportunities, a growing economy and new school systems, which has contributed to the county's rapid population growth since the 1990's. Today, out of Alabama's sixty-seven counties, Baldwin County remains one of the top two or three fastest growing (www.co.baldwin.al.us), and has one of the highest percentages of older persons per county population in the state, at 23.4%.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the population of Baldwin County was officially recorded at 182,265 residents. There are 46,299 or 25.4% of residents 55 years and older (American Community Survey 2007-2011). The diversity of the area roughly includes 85.7% white, 9.4% African-American, 0.7% American Indian, 0.7% Asian, 4.4% Hispanic/Latino with the median age of 40.1 (2010 U.S. Census). According to South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) Regional Growth Projection; between 2000 and 2010 the 60+ population grew by 23% and will have grown by 32% by the year 2030. The average life expectancy is 78.8 in Baldwin County. The median household income is \$50,706 with 13.3% of individuals below poverty level (2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). There is significant disparity among income levels of long time and rural residents of Baldwin County, with poverty concentrations in Bay Minette/North Baldwin, and in the Daphne area; and those who have retired in the Counties coastal towns on the Eastern Shore and Gulf. Baldwin County has one of the highest proportions of older adults in Alabama, with many retirees in coastal communities having no family nearby. There are fewer community resources for older adults without means to pay for services (Area Plan on Aging 2015-2017 South Alabama Regional Planning

Narratives

Commission).

The United States has been in perhaps the worst recession since the Great Depression of the 1930's. Baldwin County residents have also struggled with the three gulf hurricanes of 2004-2005 including Hurricane Katrina, and then our two coastal counties were impacted by the Deep Horizon Gulf Oil Spill of April 20, 2010. Unemployment doubled in Alabama from 2008 to 2009. In comparing 2008 to 2014, unemployment rates continue to be high with the increase from 2008 levels to June 2014 in Baldwin County from 4.1% to 5.7 % (AL Dept of Labor). Older adults and disabled adults have substantially higher unemployment rates as they have been the last hired in a competitive job market.

The economic recession continues with businesses struggling, tax revenues are down which support state and local governments, safety net savings and rainy day funds are depleted, and low to moderate income families struggle to pay for gas, utilities, food, medical care and medications. In addition to older adults seeking work experiencing higher rates of unemployment, they are often called upon to help unemployed adult children and their families, and many have seen their retirement funds/nest eggs shrink. According to the Alabama Department of Senior Services and the Area Agency on Aging of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (AAA-SARPC), the most recent needs assessment showed that the top services ranked as most important by seniors in Baldwin Counties in South Alabama were: Information on available services; information on diseases and health problems, including information on keeping a healthy mind; assistance understanding benefits; financial assistance to include food, utilities and health care costs and medicine; assistance preparing healthy foods, in home services and caregiver services. The top three personal barriers reported included were: 1) Poor health or mobility and 2) Loss of financial security and 3) understanding available benefits and services. When professionals in aging and disability were surveyed one of the top needs reported was quality, affordable health care. The top three service barriers reported by professionals were: 1) Long waiting lists/insufficient funding for programs and services; 2) Cumbersome/lengthy eligibility determination process or bureaucratic barriers that inhibit organizations from providing services; and 3) the lack of volunteers.

Multiple national studies have indicated Alabama is in the top ten of the most food insecure states. Income below the federal poverty lines is a hunger risk factor for seniors, but even seniors above 200% of poverty are at risk. Hunger is estimated to add 14 years to a senior's physical age. A 60 year old experiencing hunger has the same limitations in Activities of Daily Living as a 74 year old not a risk of hunger, which is associated with loss of independence, bone density, muscle mass, balance and effectiveness of medications, with an associated increased risk of costly institutional care. According

Narratives

to the National Council on Aging, food insecurity is much higher among older adults (16%) than the general older population (6%) and older adults have the lowest participation rate among all age groups in SNAP, with some 61% eligible for benefits that they are not accessing. And with the average SNAP benefit for seniors living alone estimated at \$69 a month or \$828 annually, this benefit could significantly impact food insecurity. Seniors often qualify for higher benefits due to their medical expenses. In order to assist the older residents of Baldwin County to receive nutritious food and maintain a well-balanced diet, one the primary focus area will be healthy futures with volunteers assisting in food pantries food distribution and food collection.

To address the general issue of financial assistance as a community need, Baldwin County RSVP volunteers will collaborate with VITA tax assistance projects and AARP's Tax Aide programs in Baldwin County by serving as volunteers for the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission's Tax Counseling for the Elderly program. RSVP volunteers will provide services to residents in locations not served by VITA or AARP, such as North Baldwin County. Currently these residents are traveling to Atmore in neighboring Escambia County Alabama for this assistance by the Escambia County RSVP. Establishing volunteers in Baldwin County will relieve Baldwin County elders from making this trip, which can be a hardship.

According to The Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, Alabama has an estimated 600,000 uninsured citizens and 11.6% of the uninsured are ages 55-64 and 1.1% age 65+. Those at risk for being uninsured include those living with incomes less than 133% of Federal Poverty Level, adults with less than a high school education and people of color. As Alabama has chosen not to expand Medicaid eligibility under the ACA, the lowest income individuals continue to be uninsured. Families USA reports that for many of the uninsured, the lack of health insurance has dire consequences, including death. And with the downturn in the economy, the Kaiser Family Foundation reports that fewer people are seeking health care. They report that about 54% of Americans said they cut back on health care, 21% did not fill a prescription and 15% cuts pills in half or skipped doses of medications due to cost concerns in the past twelve months. In 2014 Medicare requires beneficiaries to pay 50% of the cost of their name brand medications and 86% of the cost of generic medications in the donut hole or coverage gap if they do not have a Medicare Saving Program or Low Income Subsidy. Managing chronic conditions is more difficult without adequate access to affordable medications and this can cause exacerbation of illness and poorer health outcomes. While most adults age 65 and over have access to Medicare, many low income seniors cannot afford the premiums, deductibles and copayments associated with their policy, and some have not enrolled in a Medicare Part D drug plan

Narratives

due to premiums costs. A report recently released by Medicare Today indicates that nearly 40 percent of seniors with limited incomes that would qualify for assistance through Social Security Administration's (SSA) Low Income Subsidy (LIS) for Medicare D prescription benefits were not aware of the available help. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has compiled estimates of the number of Medicare Beneficiaries LIS-Eligible but unenrolled by zip code of beneficiary residence. It is estimated by CMS that the Baldwin County has 887 LIS eligible unenrolled persons. The number of these potential eligible persons is available by zip code to target volunteer outreach. These individuals could reduce the cost of their Medicare premiums, copayments and deductibles, removing barriers to enrolling and receiving health care. The estimated percentages of those eligible who are enrolled in various government programs nationwide are as follows: Medicare Savings Programs through Medicaid, QMB 33%, SLMB 13% Food stamps 30%, SSI 53%, Medicaid 60% and earned income tax credit for elderly 68%. According to the National Council on Aging, the percentage of LIS-eligible people also likely to be eligible for other benefits is as follows: 57 percent Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs) through Medicaid, 46 percent state prescription assistance programs, 37 percent SNAP/food stamps, 25 percent Medicaid programs, and 14 percent SSI. It should be noted that in Alabama, Medicaid does not count resources for MSP, so that this is generally a more available benefit for extra help for persons on Medicare expenses. The National Council on Aging reports that there is a marked under participation of seniors in benefits when compared to other population groups, with 80% of seniors who receive one benefit being eligible for one or more other public benefits but not receiving them. Seniors have the lowest participation rate for all age groups for SNAP food assistance for those eligible for this benefit. Of those seniors who get SNAP food assistance, some 85% are likely eligible for another public benefit. Additionally, the Alabama Department of Senior Services estimates that 51,622 persons age 55 and older are eligible for prescription assistance in our region. We are currently only reaching 1.5% percent of this population. RSVP volunteers can be managed and trained as SHIP (State Health Insurance Program) volunteers by the Area Agency on Aging to reach residents of South Alabama to provide education and outreach on using the preventative and other health benefits under Medicare; to screen and help eligible persons apply for Medicare Savings Programs, Low Income Subsidy and Medicaid; and to help individuals access health care services and needed health insurance and health benefits via the State Health Insurance and SenioRx programs. Based on information from the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), the health status of many adults in the state is being compromised by lifestyle choices. The major health risks for the older population include obesity, physical inactivity, high blood

Narratives

pressure, high cholesterol levels, poor nutrition, and tobacco use and exposure (Alabama Department of Senior Services 2011 -- 2012 State Plan on Aging). The leading causes of deaths in Baldwin County are heart disease, cancers, stroke, accidents, chronic lower respiratory disease, Alzheimer's disease and diabetes. Alabama, as compared to the U.S, residents have higher rates of obesity, hypertension, strokes, diabetes and their related medical impacts. The 2009-2011 U.S. American Community Survey indicates 34.2% of persons age 60+ in Baldwin County have a disability. This RSVP application has a primary focus area of healthy futures to help strengthen the local community to help address these major causes of disability and death; and the community needs assessments that indicated the need for information on health issues, access to affordable, quality health care, and the need for volunteers. Volunteer activities will focus on increasing access to health care through distributing information, training on healthy practices through evidence based health promotion programs such as Living Well Alabama and A Matter of Balance, and access to nutritious food through volunteer efforts at food pantries including food distribution and collection. Multiple national studies have indicated Alabama is in the top ten of the most food insecure states. In addition to facing economic struggles and food insecurity, many older adults also struggle with poor health. According to the 2010 National Health Interview Survey, over 80% of those aged 60+ have one or more chronic conditions--such as diabetes, arthritis, cancer, or heart disease, and half have at least two. These conditions often result in higher health care costs, and sometimes lead to limitations in daily activities. Learning how to self-manage a chronic disease is especially important since chronic diseases are responsible for 7 out of 10 deaths every year. To address the major causes of death and disability in the region, the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, which addresses the major chronic diseases, and A Matter of Balance fall prevention program to address disability and death related to accidental falls. These evidence based health education programs utilized trained community volunteers to conduct the classes. Evidence-based programs offer proven ways to promote health and prevent disease among older adults. The Center for Healthy Aging encourages and assists community-based organizations serving older adults to develop and implement these programs. Evidence-based programs are based on research. When you implement one, you can be confident you're delivering a program that works. Evidence-based programming translates tested program models or interventions into practical, effective community programs that can provide proven health benefits to participants. The Chronic Disease Self-Management Program is designed to enhance regular treatment and disease-specific education such as Better Breathers, cardiac rehabilitation, or diabetes instruction. In addition, many people have more than one chronic condition. The program is

Narratives

especially helpful for these people, as it gives them the skills to coordinate all the things needed to manage their health, as well as to help them keep active in their lives. Living Well Alabama, the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program is a workshop given two and a half hours, once a week, for six weeks, in community settings such as senior centers, churches, libraries and hospitals. People with different chronic health problems attend together. Workshops are facilitated by two trained leaders, one or both of whom are non-health professionals with chronic diseases themselves. RSVP volunteers will become trained leaders and to conduct classes. Over 1,000 people with heart disease, lung disease, stroke or arthritis participated in a randomized, controlled test of the Program, and were followed for up to three years. Stanford University looked for changes in many areas: health status (disability, social/role limitations, pain and physical discomfort, energy/fatigue, shortness of breath, psychological well-being/distress, depression, health distress, self-rated general health), health care utilization (visits to physicians, visits to emergency department, hospital stays, and nights in hospital), self-efficacy (confidence to perform self-management behaviors, confidence to manage disease in general, confidence to achieve outcomes), and self-management behaviors (exercise, cognitive symptom management, mental stress management/relaxation, use of community resources, communication with physician, and advance directives). Subjects who took the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, when compared to those who did not, demonstrated significant improvements in exercise, cognitive symptom management, communication with physicians, self-reported general health, health distress, fatigue, disability, and social/role activities limitations. They also spent fewer days in the hospital, and there was also a trend toward fewer outpatient visits and hospitalizations. This data yielded a cost to savings ratio of approximately 1:4. Many of these results persist for as long as three years. A Matter of Balance emphasizes practical strategies to reduce fear of falling and increase activity levels. Participants learn to view falls and fear of falling as controllable, set realistic goals to increase activity, change their environment to reduce fall risk factors, and exercise to increase strength and balance. This program has been adapted from the original intervention to be more suitable for community-dwelling older adults by allowing small group sessions to be led by a trained facilitator. A Matter of Balance includes eight two-hour sessions for a small group led by a trained facilitator. These coaches are volunteer lay leaders that have been trained to conduct the classes. A randomized, single-blind controlled trial was conducted to test the efficacy of a community-based group intervention to reduce fear of falling and associated restrictions in activity levels among older adults. A sample of 434 persons age 60+ years, who reported fear of falling and associated activity restriction, was recruited from 40 senior housing sites in the Boston metropolitan area. Data was

Narratives

collected at baseline, and at six-week, six-month, and 12-month follow-ups. Compared with contact control subjects, intervention subjects reported increased levels of intended activity and greater mobility control immediately after the intervention. Effects at 12 months included improved social function and mobility range. A subsequent study examined whether A Matter of Balance could be translated into a community-based volunteer lay leader model and achieves outcomes comparable to those found in the randomized controlled test. A repeated-measures, single group design was employed. Participants experienced significant increases in Falls Efficacy, Falls Management, and Falls Control at six weeks, six months, and 12 months, thus achieving comparable outcomes with those of participants in the randomized controlled test

Disaster preparedness and disaster assistance are also important issues due to the coastal nature of Baldwin County and the annual possibility of hurricanes. Baldwin County was impacted by three Gulf hurricanes between 2004-2005, by the Gulf Oil Spill of 2010, and recently during Spring floods in April 2014. Severe weather outbreak catastrophic tornadoes on April 27, 2011, cut a path of destruction that resulted in more than 200 deaths, more than 1,000 injuries, and damage to thousands of homes and businesses in Alabama. Damages were reported across 28 counties (Alabama Department of Health). Given the large concentration of older adults living on the Eastern Shore and Gulf communities in Baldwin County, disaster preparedness is essential. Lessons learned by Hurricane Katrina demonstrated that one of the most vulnerable populations during a disaster is the elderly. The Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS) continues the cause of protecting the elderly, Alabama's most vulnerable population by promoting preparedness for everyone in the aging community. As part of the disaster preparedness programs, ADSS partnered with the Alabama Department of Public Health on a preparedness educational grant to expand awareness to the elderly and those with disabilities. Through the grant, ADSS awarded funding to all the Area Agency on Aging to develop training programs and to purchase and distribute preparedness items (Alabama Department of Senior Services Fiscal Year 2013 Annual Report). One of the goals listed in the Area Agency's Goals for Fiscal Years 2015 thru 2017 is to empower AAA staff, seniors, and their caregivers in emergency preparedness and response procedures (Alabama Department of Senior Services State Plan on Aging Fiscal Years 2014 & 2016). Baldwin County RSVP will partner with the Area Agency on Aging, American Red Cross and the Baldwin County Emergency Management Agency and other disaster organizations to help meet goals and human needs of the county before, during, and after a disaster. RSVP volunteers will be utilized to train older adults on disaster preparedness through a partnership with the American Red Cross and the Area Agency on Aging.

Narratives

Baldwin County, being a retirement community with one of the highest populations of older adults age 60+ in Alabama, has a large Veteran population. Baldwin County is home to the William F. Green State Veterans Home in Bay Minette, one of the few such homes in Alabama. In addition, due to the work of Veterans groups in Baldwin County and the Veterans Affairs office in Alabama, this new veterans cemetery opened in 2013 in Spanish Fort. The Area Agency on Aging of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission reports there are 8 nursing homes and 12 assisted living facilities in Baldwin County which also have Veterans as residents. Elder Rights protections and issues of elder abuse and financial exploitation are current national and state priorities, which includes a new Elder Protection Law in Alabama. To address the large population of vulnerable older veterans in Baldwin County and Alabama's priority of protecting older persons, RSVP volunteers will be trained by the Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission to serve as Ombudsman representative volunteers to do friendly visiting to veterans at these 20 facilities to check to ensure residents rights are being respected and to do a check list related to quality care. Any care issues will be reported back to the Regional Ombudsman for intervention.

Recruitment and Development

Demonstrates a plan and infrastructure to create well-developed high quality RSVP volunteer assignments with opportunities to share their experiences, abilities, and skills to improve their communities and themselves through service in their communities

To assure a well-developed high quality RSVP volunteer assignment; RSVP will research the unmet needs of the community and then utilize the National Service Knowledge Network on the CNCS website for examples of volunteering opportunities that work, as well as incorporate CNCS strategic focus areas for volunteering. A question on the volunteer enrollment form will ask the volunteer to share any skills or interests they may have. This opens the door to discuss further with the volunteer about existing volunteer opportunities or possibly adding a new volunteer opportunity. Emphasis is placed on discussing focus area opportunities with volunteers. Once the volunteer finds a volunteer service on the list of opportunities offered that interests them; RSVP will go over the Position Description with the volunteer that gives examples of service and qualifications needed for this volunteer service. The volunteer will be given ample opportunities to share experiences, abilities, and skills with the community. They will be asked to join the RSVP staff at speaking engagements, share with government officials during special occasions with the officials, lead a group of volunteers during a particular event or develop and organize an event that improves service to the community and other volunteers. Volunteers could share their service experience with their peers during special events. An

Narratives

annual volunteer survey will help RSVP evaluate if the volunteer's skills have been enhanced or increased and their quality of life has been enhanced. In addition, volunteers will have the opportunity to be trained by the Area Agency on Aging of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission in a variety of programs to make them effective in Primary, Other Focus Area and Veterans services to include training by the Area Agency on Aging under Health Futures on Senior Hunger, be trained as volunteer teachers for the evidence based health promotion classes, become trained Long Term Care Ombudsman to advocate for veterans in Baldwin County's state veterans home, and for veterans in numbers assisted living and nursing facilities, to become State Health Insurance Counselors to help older adults and disabled populations obtain affordable health care, and to receive Tax Counseling for the Elderly training for low income adults and seniors in need of tax preparation. The American Red Cross assists local RSVPs with disaster training.

Demonstrates a plan and infrastructure to ensure RSVP volunteers receive training needed to be highly effective means to addressing identified community needs(s) in both the Primary Focus Area and in Other Focus Areas or Capacity Building

If a volunteer states they have never had experience in service area but always wanted to provide this service; RSVP will work with the volunteer to obtain needed training and orientation to make them an effective volunteer at the station that interests them to serve the community. Opportunities to build leadership skills come through the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission-Area Agency on Aging (AAA-SARPC) that serves as the regional Area Agency on Aging, which conducts an annual Legacy Leadership Institute for Older Adults. It is a particularly effective method to engage baby boomers and men, and many very active and engaged volunteers have been recruited from Baldwin County. This institute provides a week of class held at the University of South Alabama; that builds on the multiple skills retirees bring to volunteerism and their wish to make a difference in their community. Legacy Leadership Institute graduates and other community volunteers are offered opportunities to attend training for volunteer Long Term Care Ombudsman, State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) volunteer outreach and education activities, to become volunteer trainers for A Matter of Balance and Living Well Alabama Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, Benefits CheckUp and SNAP food assistance, and to become Tax Counseling for the Elderly volunteers. The Legacy Leadership Institute also provides a vehicle for volunteers to partner with other volunteers to address priority community concerns and build capacity. An example is the 2012 class of the Legacy Leadership establishing an Alzheimer's-Dementia Helpline for South Alabama. Volunteers will also be encouraged to lead committees or groups. These Lead volunteers will make suggestions on best

Narratives

practices for the volunteers to provide quality services pertaining to the primary focus area, other focus area or capacity building.

Describe the demographics of the community served and plans to recruit a volunteer pool reflective of the community served. This could possibly include:

- a. Individuals from diverse races, ethnicities, sexual orientations or degrees of English language proficiency
- b. Veterans and military family members as RSVP volunteers
- c. RSVP volunteers with disabilities

RSVP is an equal opportunity volunteer agency including those with disabilities. According to the National Council on Aging one-third of seniors are economically insecure and more than half of seniors are very or somewhat concerned about whether their savings and income will be sufficient to last the rest of their life. Baldwin County residents are very diverse economically some relying on social security as their only income and others have retirement (including military retirement). The employment status of residents ages 60+ consists of 23.3% still in the labor force while 76.7% are not in the labor force, 15.5% have less than a high school education while 23.9% have college degrees, 97.4% speak only English, the remaining 2.6% or 82 older adults do not speak English well or at all, of which 70 speak Spanish. Residents ages 65+ with any disability (hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care and independent living) is 34.2% and with no disability is 65.8% (American Community Survey 2007-2011). Potential volunteers have chronic illnesses and disabilities, and age related disabilities, but will have the desire to volunteer in meaningful ways. RSVP could bring diversity together through The Area Agency on Aging's Legacy Leadership Institute for Older Adults that brings volunteers from all walks of life, race, and ethnicity together to improve their community's wellbeing. This program has a strong record of recruiting African American, Vietnamese and Hispanic volunteers in addition to the larger white population, and in recruiting persons with various disabilities and incomes. RSVP will recruit through Volunteer Match, Area Agency on Aging website, through the United Way of Baldwin County, participating in volunteer fairs, public presentations, radio and radio talk shows, other volunteers and through partner agencies that help promote the RSVP program.

Demonstrates a plan and infrastructure to retain and recognize RSVP volunteers

To retain volunteers, RSVP staff will communicate with the volunteers either at the volunteer station, via email or by telephone at least once a month. Birthday, Get Well, and Sympathy cards will be sent to the volunteers to let them know they are important to RSVP. RSVP will host an annual recognition

Narratives

banquet and other types of recognitions throughout the year by holding meetings and social functions such as Senior Corps Week. The sponsor, Volunteer Station Managers, County Commissioners, Mayors, State Senator and Representatives, and partnering agencies will be invited to attend the annual banquet to honor the volunteers. The Legacy Leadership Institute for Older Adults graduates attends a banquet style graduation ceremony. The Volunteer Stations will recognize the volunteers at least once a year with a card, a lunch, small gift, etc. Highlights of volunteer activities will be made known through the social media and print media. The newspapers will be invited to attend RSVP events or articles with pictures are sent to the newspapers. RSVP will make sure the federal, state, and local leaders are aware of what RSVP volunteers have done for the community.

Program Management

Plans and infrastructure to ensure management of volunteer stations in compliance with RSVP program regulations (such as preventing or identifying prohibited activities)

The RSVP director will work with potential volunteer station manager to develop an agreed upon Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and a Volunteer Position Description. Once the MOU is signed by the volunteer station manager and RSVP director; the RSVP director uses the volunteer position description to recruit volunteers and make sure the volunteer station has copies of the signed MOU, volunteer position description, and timesheets. On a monthly basis, the RSVP director contacts volunteer stations to get signed volunteer timesheets and checks with them on the volunteer service. Every quarter, the RSVP director checks the volunteer file to make sure all paperwork is up to date including the Volunteer Position Description and talks to the volunteers about their assignment(s). Plans and infrastructure to develop and/or oversee volunteer stations to ensure that volunteers are performing their assigned service activities

Given the strength of the Primary Focus Area stations at food pantries, and the Area Agency on Aging's already substantial work in the area of hunger and food security, staff is able to successfully manage the volunteer stations outside the Primary Focus Area. RSVP has an ongoing relationship with the American Red Cross as a station due to the importance of disaster planning and services given the proximity of Baldwin County to the gulf coast and annual hurricane threats. Locally veterans will be assisted at the W F Green State Veterans Home, nursing homes and assisted living facilities through the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission's Ombudsman program, and the Area Agency on Aging will be a strong station which provides training and oversight for evidence based health promotion classes, the State Health Insurance Program which provides access to health care, and through its IRS Tax Counseling for the Elderly Program. The United Way of Baldwin

Narratives

County and the Baldwin County Council on Aging are strong stations to support volunteer work in community needs such as special events and senior center nutrition.

Plans infrastructure to meet changing community needs to include minimizing disruption to current volunteers as applicable and/or graduating stations as necessary

RSVP will factor in needs assessments completed by the State and County, the needs of the community, CNCS national priorities, and the needs of the volunteers to bring about a work plan for volunteers to be assigned to serve at volunteer stations. RSVP looks at the community needs by viewing needs assessments compiled by the Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS), the sponsor's Area Agency on Aging (AAA), the Alabama Department of Health (ADPH), the local United Ways and Community Foundation of South Alabama, and other sources, by attending meetings networking with agencies or community leaders to find out the specific needs of the county.

Volunteer Stations that address the Primary Focus Area of Healthy Futures includes Area Agency on Aging and its Senior Hunger Initiative, and health promotion and evidence based health education classes. Since becoming a sponsor some nine years ago when impact based emphasis had begun with CNCS, the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission-Area Agency on Aging (AAA/SARPC) has sought to increase the focus of volunteer activities on impact based projects. As a new sponsor for Baldwin County, there is not a need to graduate stations, and the work plans reflect national focus areas and priorities as well as local needs.

The structures in place for these initiatives and substantial expertise and resources of the sponsor's Area Agency on Aging make these stations strong viable and outcome based projects. These Primary Focus Area stations are the most reliable reporters for data needed for national performance measure outcomes and outputs so that needed data can be collected and measured.

The Baldwin County RSVP will be staffed with a volunteer coordinator and a full time director that will oversee both the Baldwin and Escambia County RSVP programs.

Demonstrate an organizational track record in managing volunteers in the Primary Focus Area, to include if applicable, measuring performance in the Primary Focus Area

The Area Agency on Aging of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission has operated a CNCS VISTA project for five years and is in its sixth and final year, averaging approximately 12 VISTA volunteers who are working in Focus Areas. In addition, we have operated the Escambia County RSVP for nine years, beginning with performance measurements during our first grant cycle

Narratives

as they began to be implemented. Our current Escambia County RSVP grant was awarded in a competitive cycle. Our work plans in this application demonstrate our commitment to performance based volunteer opportunities in the Primary Focus Area.

Organizational Capability

1. Plans 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 program requirements (statutes, regulations, and applicable OMB circulars) and to ensure accountability and efficient and effective use of available resources
2. Demonstrate clearly defined paid staff positions, including identification of current staff assigned to the projects and these positions will ensure the accomplishment of program objectives
3. Demonstrate organizational capacity to:
 - a. Develop and implement internal policies and operating procedures to provide governance and manage risk, such as accounting, personnel management, and purchasing
 - b. Manage capital assets such as facilities, equipment, and supplies
4. Demonstrate organizational infrastructure in the areas of robust financial management capacity and systems and past experience managing federal grant funds

The sponsoring agency has sponsored RSVP for nine years and has experience in the program area since 1961. The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) staff includes a management team with the Director of Administrative Services and the Executive Director who provides oversight for purchasing, fiscal management, personnel matters. The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) director provides program administration and support and the AAA grants manager/accountant manages cash and in-kind program resources as outlined in the attached budget for RSVP. The AAA/SARPC serves as a central advocate and resource for the older adults in the region and provides planning services, evaluation of services, comments on programs and policies that impact older adults, provides coordination of services and technical assistance to communities, is a major source of funding for aging services in the region and provides certain services to include Aging and Disability Resource Center. SARPC has a close working relationship with local communities in its region and works on an ongoing basis with these communities to solve community problems. Experience with volunteer training, support and recognition has enabled AAA/SARPC to enjoy a diverse and stable volunteer pool. Because of AAA/SARPC past experience with volunteer service, assisting older adults, working with the community and community leaders; they have been a good

Narratives

match for RSVP and have helped the RSVP program grow.

The key management staff involved in program management is Julie McGee, the director for the AAA/SARPC. Mrs. McGee has a Master's Degree and is a licensed social worker with 31 years of professional experience, of which over 20 involved managing social service programs. Other staff includes AAA grants manager, Rita Thompson, an experienced accountant with a Master's Degree. AAA director, grants manager, and RSVP director work collaboratively with development of grant application. Charles Smith, RSVP director, holds a bachelor's degree with 16 years experience in human resources; four of these years were in the United States Air Force and he worked 8 years as an assistant manager. Because RSVP is a program for the community; each staff member possesses a background in working with a diverse group of people including older adults as well as working within a budget.

AAA/SARPC has managed a volunteer program for over thirty years and like many agencies that receive federal funds, has performance measures that must be monitored in all of its federally funded programs. The AAA/SARPC uses the Aging Information Management System (AIMS) for data collection and reporting to the Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS). Client satisfaction surveys have been conducted for selected programs. Annual goals and objectives are set and program plans are developed, monitored and adjusted as needed to provide accountability and ongoing quality improvement. The impact/outcome based programming required by the Corporation is in keeping with efforts established by the ADSS and The Administration on Aging (AOA). The AAA/SARPC is also an AmeriCorps VISTA grantee and manages 12 VISTAs involved in impact based projects with measurable outcomes.

AAA/SARPC volunteer programs include Benefits Enrollment Center/Aging and Disability Center, State Health Insurance Program (SHIP), Financial Resource for age 55 and over, Senior Medicare Fraud, Long Term Care Ombudsman, Living Well Alabama, A Matter of Balance, Tax Counseling for the Elderly and the Legacy Leadership for Older Adults classes. The Area Agency on Aging has an Advisory Council to secure community participation and the Escambia County RSVP has a program specific county level RSVP Advisory Council for community participation. AAA/SARPC assists RSVP in the financial management of the grant from CNCS by receiving the grant money and keeping track of the spending of the money. The policies and procedures as well as departmental rules and responsibilities are as follows: for receipt of funds; the fiscal officer designates a person to make a duplicate copy of daily receipts of checks with one copy remaining with the fiscal officer and the other copy with the executive director. The designated person prepares deposit slips with receipts deposited

Narratives

on the same day as received and no later than the end of the next banking day. The validated deposit slip will be reconciled by the executive director or his designated alternate immediately after depot is made. For purchases: purchases or commitments for supplies and equipment necessary for operation shall be made only by purchase order on a form completed by the designated secretary. Fifty-three percent of SARPC's annual budget comes from federal funds such as Administration on Aging (AOA), National Council on Aging (NCOA), Department of Transportation (DOT), Centers for Medicare/Medicaid Services (CMS), and the IRS. SARPC is assessed by multiple entities related to funded work projects; is audited annually and also receives audits by the state examiners. GAAP policies are employed including A133 audit.

When RSVP needs any new equipment such as computer, printer, shredder, etc. or supplies, AAA/SARPC will procure requested items for RSVP. The RSVP director sends a written request to purchase needed items for the program to the AAA/SARPC director and grant manager, once approved, a purchase order number is assigned and purchase is completed. AAA/SARPC personnel management support consists of the Director of Administrative Services and the Executive Director who provide oversight for purchasing, fiscal management, personnel matters. The AAA director oversees the planning and administration of the aging programs and the grant manager who oversees the administration of all grants for the programs. AAA/SARPC staff adheres to SARPC's employee guide for all policies and procedures including purchasing, travel, and personnel management support, and RSVP has an internal handbook closely based on SARPC's employee guide. Job descriptions for staff and administrators help define roles of each position and are addressed in the employee guide. Any travel outside the AAA/SARPC region requires a Travel Request form. The travel request must be substantiated with adequate documentation for permission to travel and submitted to the executive director. Travel expenses to be reimbursed to the employee must be submitted.

The AAA/SARPC director and staff will evaluate the program on a quarterly basis by reviewing progress towards work plan objectives with particular emphasis on impact based plans. As part of continuing quality improvement, the AAA/SARPC director, in conjunction with RSVP director, will look at recruitment issues for each work plan, progress toward goals and objectives, challenges and successes. This process will be used to help direct resources, modify or develop new work plans, delete other plans, look for emerging opportunities to develop or enhance program and services, and modify activities to support the success of the project.

Other

1. Demonstrate a plan and infrastructure to ensure the project is in compliance with the RSVP federal

Narratives

regulations 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 in RSVP. Once a year, the director updates the MOU with the volunteer station manager. The director prepares a progress report for CNCS. This progress report helps determine the impact the program had on the community. To assure all goals and objectives are met and result in a high quality project, the AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer will assist in an annual assessment of the program as a whole by using a section of the RSVP Project Self-Assessment Checklist from the handbook as the assessment tool. This assessment will be given to organizations, groups, and community leaders familiar with the RSVP program and an advisory council member will compile the results. The RSVP project director with the assistance of the VISTA volunteer will conduct annual surveys of volunteer stations and volunteers to assure the program addresses specified community needs and provide meaningful placements for the volunteers. In so doing, RSVP volunteer activities are directed toward impact-based activities. Specific outcomes are monitored as delineated in the work plans for the Primary Focus Area and other outcome based work plans. The annual volunteer surveys will be completed during annual volunteer recognition event. RSVP seeks the advice of the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) director as well as CNCS state specialist to develop and manage volunteer stations and volunteer assignments as well. The RSVP director collects timesheets from volunteer stations every month and inputs the data into Volunteer Reporter software to demonstrate the concrete impacts of the project and volunteers. The director tracks the information at least quarterly to measure progress towards stated objectives and outcomes, with adjustments made as necessary as part of continuous quality improvement and monitoring.

A proposed advisory council has been identified and the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission will expand its Escambia County RSVP Advisory Council to secure community participation in Baldwin County. Advisory Council members added will include people who are knowledgeable about human and social needs of the community; competent in the field of community service and volunteerism; capable of helping the sponsor meet its administrative and program responsibilities including fund-raising, publicity and programming for impact; interested in and knowledgeable regarding the capability of older adults; and of a diverse composition that reflects the demographics of the service area. The Advisory Council will have bylaws for operations, a chair and terms of service.

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A