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Executive Summary

Fulton County Council on Aging (FCCOA) was established as a non-profit in 1974 in Rochester, Indiana. They, in turn, sponsor RSVP of Fulton County. Both FCCOA and RSVP of Fulton County are based at the Community Center in Rochester. We work to provide programs & services that support our community members, both young and old, so that longer independent living is achieved, and the lives of those in our community who are disabled or living at or below poverty-level conditions are enriched. As an ever-growing community center, we strive to continually add more activities to meet the needs of our expanding & aging community.

We currently have 235 RSVP volunteers who will serve our community. Some of their activities will include providing free tax preparation services for elderly and low-income individuals, providing a new home for a low-income family, mentoring school-age children by providing after-school homework assistance and snacks/meals, providing tutoring services to improve literacy skills for those who wish to better themselves and their future job opportunities, providing low-cost or free health care information and services to both adults and children, and building ramps for community members who use wheelchairs or walkers to get in/out of their homes.

Our Primary Focus Area is Healthy Futures. Our main goal of increasing access to food for adults and children will be accomplished through volunteers working with stations such as county food pantries, Rochester Nutrition Site, SuperKids, & Woodlawn Hospital Meals on Wheels. Volunteers also assist with addressing food insecurity issues by providing food at Matthew's Market, United Ministries Christmas Baskets, and Free Meal @ Grace. At the end of the three-year grant, we anticipate the following outcomes: a increase in the satisfaction of senior citizens who can stay in their homes longer to enjoy independent living due to access to nutritious food, an increase in school performance of school-age children as a result of access to nutritious food, and stronger social ties for community members in need due to interaction with RSVP volunteers.

For fiscal year 7/1/15 - 6/30/16, the CNCS federal investment of \$28,723.00 will be supplemented by \$25,084.00 in anticipated non-federal sources, including in-kind donations, fundraisers, & other donations.

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Strengthening Communities

Fulton County is centrally located in the northern third of Indiana, and as of 2013 has a population of 20,449, according to StatsIndiana.com. The county covers 368 square miles, which results in a population of 55.5 persons per square mile. Rochester, the county seat, is the largest city in Fulton County, and holds approximately 30% of the county's population.

Fulton County has a rich history, which is well documented by the Fulton Co. Museum & Historical Society. Agriculture and farming were the top economic fields at one time, and the county is known for its round barns, which were very economical and saved farmers additional labor costs. Today, economy plays a major role in the lives of Fulton County residents, but in a different way. The statistics in these narrative sections are from StatsIndiana.edu and/or the US Census Bureau, unless otherwise noted. The unemployment rate as of June 2014 for Fulton County is 6.1%. While that statistic is on par with the rest of the United States currently, for those in Fulton County who do have jobs, many still cannot afford the basic needs for living safely and securely. Per the latest available statistics (2012), 15.5% of the population in the county now lives below the poverty line. Increasing poverty levels are the trend here - in the year 2000, there were only 8.7% of Fulton County residents living below the poverty line. That means the number of Fulton County residents living below the poverty line has almost doubled in just over 10 years. Poverty rates among children under the age of 18 is 23.1%, per the latest figures available (2012), and the number of school-age children receiving free/reduced lunches in 2013 is 1,506. With 3,675 students in the county, that equates to 41% of our school-age children being on free/reduced lunches. The number of residents receiving food stamp assistance as of 2013 is 2,847. In 2012, out of the 8,437 households in the county, 2,064 (close to one-fourth) are households that house someone who lives alone. These same statistical sources indicates that 17.4% of Fulton County residents are senior citizens (age 65 and over). With high poverty rates, especially where children are involved, these statistics demonstrate that there is a clear need for residents of Fulton County to have access to basic daily needs, such as nutritious food. With over 15% of residents living below the poverty line, and over 23% of households with children under age 18 living below the poverty line, securing food is a hardship. Children who do not get proper nutrition can perform poorer in school, which can lead to lower standardized test scores, and fewer graduates overall from high school. Job opportunities can be scarce for those that do not graduate or drop out of school. Senior citizens who are disabled, alone or homebound and financially unable to secure adequate nutrition due to living solely on Social Security, run the risk of poor mental health, less

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socialization and more isolation, increased unaddressed medical issues, and general depression/withdraw from society. With 25% of Fulton County households housing someone living alone, and 17% of residents are age 65 or older, these issues are a real possibility.

Our Primary Focus Area of Healthy Futures addresses these issues by providing food assistance to those Fulton County residents who are in need of such help. Families receive assistance so that children can get proper nutrition and have a stable foundation on which to learn each day at school. This leads to increased self-esteem, confidence, better test scores, and motivation to continue to perform well with regard to their education. Senior citizens who have access to a nutritious meal each day are less apt to have mental health issues and have increased social interaction with their community. With access to food, whether that be from a food pantry, or from receiving a meal at the Nutrition Site or delivered to their home, all residents receiving assistance with food would have additional funds with which to pay other necessary household expenses, such as rent, utilities, and taxes.

Our plan at RSVP of Fulton County for data collection is to utilize a survey which would keep track of the number of families and the number of individuals who receive assistance from the food pantry, along with answers to questions such as "Has the food pantry prevented you (& your family) from going hungry?", and "Were you able to pay other bills with the money saved by using the food pantry?". We also plan to survey those receiving ready-to-eat meals from the Nutrition Site, and from delivered meals via Meals on Wheels - these surveys would keep track of similar output and outcome information, such as how many meals are served or delivered, and whether or not the meal prevented the recipient from going hungry. By keeping track of the output, such as the number of people/meals served at the food pantries, nutrition site, and delivered meals, the outcomes of increased ability to pay other necessary household bills and the increase in social interaction with the community will be easily seen as well. To capture information pertaining to how many seniors (age 65+), disabled, and veterans are being served, we plan to add questions on the survey forms to ask if any individuals being served by the food pantries, nutrition site, or Meals on Wheels are either seniors, disabled, and/or veterans. The answers to these questions will allow us to keep track of this information. Stations managers will also be consulted as to the individuals served by the food pantry, nutrition site, and Meals on Wheels, making sure that proper data is collect from recipients of these services. We are considering adding new stations in the future for additional locations that address food insecurity in

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Fulton County, such as Matthew's Market and Free Meal @ Grace. These alliances will further strengthen ties to our community, allowing RSVP volunteers to truly make a difference where it is needed most. Volunteers who assist with all of these stations and programs will be tracked using volunteer hour sheets which will be input into Volunteer Reporter software. This will be used to ensure that at least 25% of unduplicated RSVP volunteers are volunteering with the Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area.

Recruitment and Development

Recruiting volunteers for RSVP assignments so that RSVP volunteers have the opportunity to share their best abilities is an ongoing commitment for RSVP. Our plan to create quality assignments for our volunteers includes continuing to work with existing stations where the need is greatest, canvassing community members and leaders to determine new opportunities that arise, and developing those opportunities into assignments for RSVP volunteers in the community whose skills best match the needs of the assignment. Volunteers come to us with a variety of backgrounds - some who already have a good idea of what activities they would like to be involved with, and others who are new to volunteering and want to be placed where they can do the most good. With over 30 stations, Fulton County has a multitude of options when it comes to selecting a job or assignment on which to work. Volunteers are asked when registering to be a volunteer what areas they have experience in, what areas they like to perform activities, and what their occupational background is - this information is invaluable in placing a volunteer where they can be the most helpful. Potential volunteers are also asked what types of activities they do not like to participate in, so that they are not inadvertently placed in a job that does not suit either the volunteer or the assignment. The RSVP Director can then input this information into the Volunteer Reporter software program. When volunteers are needed for a particular assignment, Volunteer Reporter can be utilized to see which volunteers like/want to perform that activity, and the RSVP Director can contact those volunteers.

During the initial interview with the potential volunteer, the RSVP Director can also discuss various opportunities that are or will be available, possibly ones that the new volunteer hasn't thought of or considered. This promotes dialogue so that the volunteer might be willing to try something new or participate in an event that they have not been a part of in the past. This broadens the volunteer's horizon of activities they like to be involved with, while at the same time more efficiently completing a particular assignment to which volunteers have been assigned. Stations are contacted during the year for updates as to the different jobs available at their particular station. Stations that have a need for

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new volunteers are provided with individuals that are interested in that job, preferably volunteers that can share their experiences and skills. For example, a volunteer who had a previous career as a nurse would be an excellent fit for volunteering in the low-cost/free health clinic, as they can share their experiences and skills as a nurse to better the lives of those needing medical attention. Volunteers already giving of their time at a particular station, along with station leaders, provide training to the new volunteer. This sharpens the skills of the veteran volunteer, who must review the rules and procedures of a particular job at a particular station, and teach it to someone else. Another example is our food pantry, which is a part of our Healthy Futures Primary Focus Area. Volunteers that would like to begin volunteering in our food pantry participate in a 2- to 3-week long training period, pairing them with a veteran volunteer at the food pantry, so that the new volunteer can learn the procedures set in place along with the criteria that food pantry recipients must meet in order to qualify for assistance. This station requires that volunteers be able to manage a card system used by the food pantry to keep track of data such as number of recipients served (both families as a unit and individuals), the frequency with which the recipient is assisted, and the amount of assistance the recipient receives. Volunteers who have or can learn office management skills, and have a desire to assist in the food pantry are placed in this station. The new volunteer is not allowed to work alone in that assignment until they have completed the training period. All stations are required, per the Memorandum of Understanding they sign, to provide training to volunteers so that they can successfully fulfill the needs of that station. Training will be verified with the station manager or leader as a record that volunteers are receiving the knowledge they need to perform the assignment and be highly effective.

Our Primary Focus Area of Healthy Futures will have at least 25% of the unduplicated RSVP volunteers. Through service by our RSVP volunteers to our RSVP stations such as Rochester Nutrition Site, Food Pantry, and Meals on Wheels, both adults and children will have access to nutritious food, which will improve our community as a whole on so many different levels. Adults and senior citizens will have additional funds with which to pay other necessary bills, such as rent and utilities. This will lead to increased stability in their home life, and improved mental health and social ties. Children receiving nutritious food on a regular basis have improved health overall, better concentration in school, and improved test scores. Low-income members of the community, and others who qualify, can receive health care assistance from RSVP volunteers at Compassionate Health Center. These volunteers assist with distributing information on health care services, and

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administering low- and no-cost health care to those individuals who need it. This results in outcomes such as fewer sick days taken by employed individuals, and less illness spread throughout the community as a result of medical issues being addressed early. As access to food and health care services/information are top needs in Fulton County, eligible individuals are encouraged to register to be an RSVP volunteer, as their services can provide the most benefit to and impact on our community.

Our community demographics as they relate to race and ethnicity, per the most recent US Census Bureau, are as follows:

By Race:

White	86%
Black	9.5%
Asian	1.9%
American Indiana/Alaskan	.4%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	.1%
Two or more groups	1.8%

By Hispanic or Latino Origin:

Non-Hispanic	93.6%
Hispanic	6.4%

While Fulton County is primarily a White Non-Hispanic area, RSVP of Fulton County strives to diversify our volunteers by being open to all races and ethnicities. We promote our organization by reaching community members via our local daily paper, The Rochester Sentinel, and our monthly newsletter, The Golden Chronicle. We plan to let our community know through these media tools that our organization does not base membership on race, ethnicity, veteran status, disability, language barriers, or sexual orientation. We also plan to work closely with our station that provide services to our veterans - American Legion Post 36. Through the American Legion, we can ensure that volunteer opportunities are offered to our veterans and their families, so that they know they are a valuable part of our community. We also have a new individual in the Veteran's Service Officer position at the

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county level, and we plan to foster a relationship with him so that veterans are served as their needs arise. Per our county Veteran's Service Officer, there are 1,662 veterans currently living in Fulton County.

Our plan to retain and recognize our RSVP volunteers involves a variety of ways to show appreciation. We hold a banquet each year, to which all RSVP volunteers are invited. This banquet involves serving dinner to the attendees, reviewing the past years accomplishments through a presentation given by the RSVP Director, and recognizing volunteers with a token gift or gifts. We also recognize those in RSVP who have given the most service in terms of hours during a certain time period - for example, recognizing the top 5 or 10 volunteers over the past 12 months period. This is a wonderful way to appreciate those that really go beyond what is asked and give of themselves, their time, and their talents to better our community. Sometimes members of the community do not realize all of the volunteer work that a particular volunteer might be performing until just such an event. We retain volunteers by continually engaging them in dialogue about what activities they like to perform, and where the best fit is for them in the community. We make sure that volunteers know they are thanked for their service by saying "Thank You", whether that be in person or through our newsletter. Many current volunteers recruit their family, friends, and neighbors to join, as that way they could perform volunteer assignments together, be more effective in completing an assigned task, and develop a greater sense of friendship and community.

Program Management

Managing an RSVP program takes organization, flexibility, and follow-up. Volunteers are assigned to stations which show a need for services, and for which the work fulfills the desire of the volunteer to put their best talents to use. Our plan to ensure that stations are in compliance with the program rules would be to meet with the station leaders or managers to hold a discussion about a variety of subjects, including what activities the volunteers are performing at the station, and/or what new jobs the station would like to create. We would also discuss which volunteers are working there, and review RSVP's prohibited activities. By touching base with the station face-to-face, the RSVP Director lets them know that we are always available for any questions or concerns they have about the program, and that we truly care about the work that the volunteers perform. These visits would take place a minimum of 1 time (once) per 12-month period. Our plan would also include a follow-up telephone call in the interim (6 months into the 12-month period or more frequently as necessary) if the need is there for clarification of rules or other questions. The need for a more frequent call could

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be in the form of information from a volunteer as to the type of activities they are performing at a certain station, or communication initiated by the station leader with questions or concerns. Visits would be documented in the station casefile, along with discussion topics.

To ensure that volunteers are performing their assigned services, a visit in-person to the worksite is needed. These could be announced or unannounced visits. Visits to observe the volunteers in action would be a minimum of 1 time (once) per 12-month period. These visits can be combined with the visit to meet with the station leader, if circumstances permit. The casefile would be documented as to the observation visit and any concerns or issues that were addressed at that time.

Based on both of these types of visits (to talk with station managers and to observe the volunteers), future follow-up visits will be considered, if needed.

When adding or graduating stations as needed, the process will be completed with minimal disruption to the volunteers. Volunteers who are associated with a graduating station will be notified of the graduation of the station, and provided the opportunity to change to another station where their skills could be utilized. When a new station is added, volunteers who have indicated an interest in the new activity will be contacted to inquire as to their consideration of volunteering for the new station. One volunteer location that is being considered to be its own station is the Fulton County Animal Adoption & Education Center. There are some current stations that could be considered for graduation if more frequent activity isn't available for volunteers at those stations. Discussions with volunteers will take place to garner their input as to any potential new stations, or new jobs at current stations. The best way to find out what is going on is to observe and ask questions, and then listen.

The track record for RSVP of Fulton County, as it relates to our Primary Focus Area of Health Futures, is one of measuring performance by securing surveys as to the recipient's opinion regarding how the service helped them. Food Pantry recipients are surveyed about their experience in receiving assistance, including questions concerning if they were treated with respect, if the service was important to them, if they were out/almost out of food for themselves/their family, and if they were prevented from going hungry. We will continue to use these surveys to secure information about food pantry recipients. We plan to implement surveys for our nutrition site, as well as the Meals on Wheels program, to gather similar information about individuals receiving ready-to-eat hot meals. This will

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allow us to measure our impact on our community - we strive for increasing numbers of recipients indicating that they were helped by these meal programs, and that they felt less isolated and more connected with their community due to the interaction with the RSVP program and the RSVP volunteer. Surveys will be conducted 1-2 times per 12-month period for the Food Pantry, Meals on Wheels, and the Rochester Nutrition Site to determine the recipients satisfaction with the program. The results of these surveys will determine future needs of the community to be met.

The RSVP Director is responsible for ensuring that the program is in compliance with Federal regulations, including establishing an RSVP Advisory Council, having signed MOU documents in each station's casefile, and ensuring that all volunteers are eligible to serve as an RSVP volunteer. New volunteer registration forms were implemented approximately 1 year ago, which included a section for age verification of the prospective volunteer, by reviewing a valid photo ID, such as a driver's license or government-issued ID. An RSVP Handbook was implemented which discusses a brief history of the RSVP program in Fulton County, as well as the benefits of being an RSVP volunteer. All stations currently have signed valid MOUs in their casefiles. These MOUs need to be renewed every three (3) years, and the Director will contact stations at the time of MOU renewal to secure a new signed MOU. RSVP currently has an established Advisory Council, which will continue to exist. Members of the council may be modified, as needed. Most council members would be RSVP members, but some may be non-RSVP members that still volunteer. The council members will be used as a sounding board, discussing any new ways that RSVP can continue to have a positive impact on the community. RSVP of Fulton County will continue to ensure that the program is managed efficiently, with all required rules and regulations being followed.

Organizational Capability

RSVP of Fulton County has been operated satisfactorily in the past, and will continue to do so in the future by means of leadership from three sets of position - the RSVP Director, the Executive Director of our sponsoring agency, who is the Fulton County Council on Aging (FCCOA), and our volunteers. Working together in this manner, our organization is fully capable of administering the RSVP program to fit the needs of the community and meet our goals.

RSVP of Fulton County currently has a staff of one, who holds the position of Director of RSVP. There are no plans currently to increase staffing on a permanent basis - our current budget does not allow for that at this time. Day-to-day duties of the RSVP Director include ensuring that daily

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volunteer positions are filled, such as the front desk receptionist at the Community Center and Bingo caller duties. Administrative duties such as reviewing incoming mail, fielding incoming phone calls or other forms of communication regarding RSVP volunteer opportunities, and fundraising implementation activities are handled by both the RSVP Director and volunteers. Through training and experience, our volunteers along with the RSVP Director, have been capable of managing our RSVP program successfully, so that volunteer positions are filled, funds are raised to support our program, and the program runs smoothly and efficiently.

To ensure accountability with regard to financial operations, both the RSVP Director and another party (either the FCCOA Executive Director or an RSVP Advisory Board Council member) must sign checks to pay expenses (two signatures are required). The RSVP Director reconciles the bank statement each month, and forwards it for review and approval to the FCCOA Executive Director. Receipts for purchases and expenses are attached to the reconciled bank statement for further detail on purchases. This way, there is a checks & balances process in place so that no single person is in charge of finances for RSVP. Larger purchases for equipment or supplies are discussed with the FCCOA Executive Director to secure input about the effectiveness of such purchase so that RSVP goals are on track to be achieved. In-kind donations are provided each month from such sources as: free meals provided by Woodlawn Hospital to hospital volunteers, space for RSVP staff provided by the City of Rochester, and the use of the fax machine provided by FCCOA. These in-kind amounts are documented by month via a form sent to each in-kind provider so that the amount of in-kind donated is in writing. Forms showing in-kind donations are kept on file at the RSVP office. Both the RSVP Director and the FCCOA Director are aware of the budget for RSVP, which is consulted often to determine if the program is operating within the budget set for the year. Any modifications considered for spending or the budget is discussed between the FCCOA Director and the RSVP Director so that expenses are appropriate for the organization. Both the RSVP Director and the FCCOA Director have had experience in the past managing grant funds, and both have done so within their respective budgets.

Annually, FCCOA and RSVP are subject to an audit performed by an outside independent accounting firm. Documentation such as verification of grant approval, bank statements, receipts for larger expenses, and any other requested documentation is provided to the auditors for review. No issues have been noted with respect to RSVP activities in the past, which provides another indication that the

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program has sound oversight, and is run effectively and smoothly.

The FCCOA Policies & Procedures guide, along with the RSVP Handbook, provide guidance for operations of both organizations. Policies regarding work hours, payroll, behavior, and other issues as they relate to employed staff are spelled out so that all employees are aware of the rules. The RSVP Handbook defines who can be a volunteer, what benefits they receive, and the process of locating an opportunity in the community where the volunteer can be of the most help.

Overall, it is a team effort to run the RSVP program, and with the help of our sponsoring agency and the volunteers, we are capable of managing the program smoothly and efficiently.

Other

N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A