

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

Experience Works is pleased to submit this application for program funding for the 2015 RSVP competition. In preparation for submitting this proposal, Experience Works carefully reviewed the scope and terms and conditions listed in the announcement of federal funding opportunity and conducted readiness and risk management assessments. Our assessments indicate that an Experience Works RSVP program would be appropriate, feasible, effective and valuable to all program stakeholders. Experience Works, Inc. is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit, community-based organization, originally named Green Thumb and chartered in 1965 as a small, rural demonstration program.

With this submission Experience Works is requesting \$32,235 of annual funding to support 92 unduplicated volunteers in the MO-3X Service Area. The service area includes Pettis County. Focus Areas for this project will include: Healthy Futures and Capacity Building. At the end of the three-year grant, CNCS federal investment will be supplemented by \$19,341 of non-federal resources.

Experience Works is funded through grants and contracts from federal and state grant makers, foundations, and the generous support of individual contributions. Experience Works is the nation's largest U.S. Department of Labor Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) national grantee. SCSEP is a community service and paid job training program for older workers. It was authorized by Congress in Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 to provide subsidized, part-time job training for low-income persons 55 years of age and older. Participants gain work experience in a variety of community service activities at non-profit organizations; Federal, State and local governments; and public facilities including schools, hospitals, day care centers, and senior centers.

Experience Works has more than 300 employees, and impacts more than 50,000 people each year through its operations in 30 states and Puerto Rico. Our mission is to improve the lives of older workers through employment, community service and training.

This project is subject to Executive Order 12373 and will fully comply with Section 401(a) of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 423(a)), Section 204 of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (42(U.S.C. 3334)), and Section 301 of Title 3 of the United States Code, in order to foster an integrated governmental partnership and strengthen

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federalism by relying on State and local processes for the State and local government coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance and direct Federal development.

### Strengthening Communities

Describing the Community:

According to 2013 Census data, the MO-3X service area (Pettis County) encompasses 682.22 square miles with a population of 42,205. The population density per square mile is 61.9 persons. 15.1% of the population is age 65 or older and 17.2% of the population lives below the poverty level. The median income is \$38,543.

Theory of Change and Community Impact:

The MO-3X service area faces struggles with (a) food insecurity due to persistently high levels of poverty (approximately 17.2% of people in the MO-3X service area; 7,259 people out of a total population of just 42,205; live below federal poverty levels); and (b) lack of health care access due to high numbers of uninsured individuals (15.1% across the state).

The average hospital cost per inpatient day (before insurance) is \$1,424 and about 912,670 Missourians do not have health insurance state-wide. Access to care, including the availability of medical services, is believed to be a key factor in improving health. Access to comprehensive, quality care impacts overall physical, social, and mental health status; prevention of disease and disability detection and treatment of health conditions in the earliest states when they are most effectively managed or reversed; and when individuals have access to medical insurance. Providing access to insurance coverage; a financial barrier to access of medical care; increases uptake of preventative services, results in more patients having a routine primary provider, decreases reports of depression, and reduces the number of bankruptcies stemming from medical expenses.

The federal government is running the Missouri Health Insurance Marketplace, but as with many areas of the country, enrollment has not met projections. According to Gallup, the state reported just a .1% drop in the uninsured rate post-ACA implementation, from 15.2% in 2013 to 15.1% by mid-year 2014. A J.D. Power Survey found that many shoppers began the enrollment process but had problems completing their plan purchase at the time of the survey primarily due to three reasons: 1) A combination of technical problems experienced during enrollment (40%); 2) The application process taking too long (19%); and 3) The website not having enough information about the plans to make a

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selection (18%).

Additionally, 49% of shoppers who didn't complete enrollment did not choose a plan during their initial shopping experience because they had not yet decided which plan they wanted. The survey found that satisfaction was higher among those enrollees who got in-person help from brokers or navigators.

The primary focus area of this project will be Healthy Futures. Service activities in the primary Focus Area will help communities and special populations with unmet needs related to health and well-being. CNCS-supported RSVP volunteers will engage in the following:

- 1) Healthy Futures ¿Obesity and Food¿ and service activities will include: Food Distribution, Food Collection, and Food Pantry Support.
- 2) Healthy Futures ¿Access to Care¿ and service activities will include: developing and distributing materials which provide uninsured individuals with information on health insurance, health care access, and health benefits programs.
- 3) Capacity Building-activities will include volunteer mentoring; data collection; training volunteer coordinators; certified Marketplace Navigators working with volunteer stations to develop service opportunities appropriate for people new to volunteering; bite sized introductory sessions about volunteering for hard to reach individuals; and workshops to develop employability.

In accordance with RSVP National Performance Measure H10, this project will increase the number of low-income individuals and military families who receive emergency food assistance via the CNCS-supported service activities of food collection, food distribution, and pantry support. Towards meeting our desired output targets for this project under Performance Measure H10, the number of unduplicated individuals for whom the distributed food is intended will be recorded in a client tracking database or tracking form.

The CNCS-supported services which this project will provide, in accordance with Performance Measure Output H10 as described above, will be undertaken towards meeting the outcome goal delineated in RSVP National Performance Measure Outcome H12, namely an increase in the number of individuals who report an increase in food security for themselves and their children as a result of the CNCS-supported services mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

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To that end, the adult family member who received the CNCS-supported services will be administered a post-program questionnaire, 3-6 months after receiving emergency food assistance from the program, asking them about a) the current level of food security of the adults and children in their household; and b) their level of food security prior to receiving CNCS-supported emergency food assistance from the program. This questionnaire will be modeled on the surveys used by The Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition service to assess household food security, and may draw on the performance measurement tools developed by CNCS and available at [www.nationalserviceresources.org](http://www.nationalserviceresources.org). The collected survey data will be logged and tracked in a database, and analyzed to compare levels of food security before and after receiving CNCS-supported emergency food assistance from the program, towards meeting the specific outcome goal for RSVP National Performance Measure Outcome H12 as specified in the workplan.

In accordance with RSVP National Performance Measure H2, this project will increase the number of individuals to whom information on health insurance, health care access and health benefits programs is delivered. To that end, CNCS-supported services in this project will:

- 1) Increase the number of individuals who are aware of financial assistance options available through the Health Insurance Marketplace.
- 2) Target and refer uninsured individuals to certified navigators, when appropriate, to apply for federal assistance through the federally-facilitated Health Insurance Marketplace.
- 3) Develop and share additional information to help reduce health care costs. RSVP volunteers will serve as in-person application counselors for Missourians who want additional information regarding the federally-facilitated Marketplace and individuals interested in finding additional ways to reduce the cost of health care. For individuals who need additional assistance with the online application, RSVP volunteers will refer them to certified Navigators.

Towards meeting our desired output measures for this project under Performance Measure H2, the number of unduplicated new individuals provided with information on health insurance, health care access and health benefits programs via the above CNCS-supported service activities will be tracked in reports and logs of interactions with those individuals. Experience Works will take special care to follow the data collection procedures outlined in Performance Measure H2, by counting each individual only once, regardless of the number of information delivery methods with which they were

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targeted under this project.

Examples of information to help reduce the cost of health care include:

1) Information regarding obtaining emergency and urgent care. For example, sometimes, a trip to the emergency room is unavoidable, but in other cases, individuals may be able to go to a much cheaper urgent care center or convenience care clinic for some types of care. The cost varies by the type of facility: The average cost nationwide of an emergency room visit is \$1,553, compared with \$135 for an urgent care center and \$58 for a convenience care clinic. These cost savings can be realized in the event of an emergency if members know ahead of times which nearby urgent care and convenience care clinics are included in their insurer's network.

2) Medication Choices. Generic drugs can cost as much as 80% less than their brand-name alternatives. The lower list price makes a huge difference in a plan's deductible period, when an insured individual is paying the full, out of pocket price for medications. Coinsurance rates are usually lower too; often 10% to 15% of the cost for generics, 25% for preferred brand-name drugs, and 50% for non-preferred, brand-name drugs. Healthcare consumers can benefit from web-based services which compare drug prices by health plan and employer, and may find additional good deals on generics at certain stores, such as Walmart and Target, which charge as little as \$4 for a 30-day supply of certain drugs or \$10 for a 90-day supply.

### Recruitment and Development

Active recruitment of RSVP volunteers is a top priority for Experience Works. Experience Works will leverage more than 49 years of experience working with older workers and organizations that support them to develop a pipeline of volunteers for this project.

Our approach will begin with drafting compelling recruitment messages that explain why Experience Works RSVP is important to the local community. Our message will be simple and direct, communicating the need for a volunteer's service and the good he/she can do. We will stress the needs of the community for volunteer service, but also delineate the benefits the volunteer will receive. These include doing well and helping the community, but there may also be valuable skills and experience that the volunteer will gain.

Our concentric circle recruitment efforts will begin with individuals who are already familiar with our programs. This includes participants in Senior Community Service Employment Programs, Area

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Department on Aging, senior citizen centers, social networks and community based organizations that work with older adults.

Experience Works will leverage existing resources and promotional/outreach resources available through Experience Works Senior Community Service Program (SCSEP), CNCS to customize outreach materials to recruit eligible volunteers. Experience Works will also take advantage of the existing training platforms available through Experience Works University (an online training portal) to customize training for RSVP staff and volunteers, and to develop effective recruitment plans and practices as part of initial training for RSVP volunteers and staff at regularly scheduled meetings and technical assistance training sessions.

All new volunteers and volunteer stations will receive a program orientation that explains the mission, vision and policies and procedures for the RSVP. The volunteer orientation is an opportunity to collaborate with fellow staff members, RSVP advisory committee members, and volunteer station staff to promote a volunteerist culture and ensure that volunteers and volunteer stations are fully integrated and supported by staff. The orientation will involve a joint planning process involving Experience Works leaders, staff, RSVP advisory committee members and current volunteers. The orientation will review the range of volunteer opportunities available, including one-time opportunities, episodic volunteering, and short/long term volunteering. The orientation will provide volunteers with a range of skills and opportunities to serve in both skilled and non-skilled-specific categories.

In addition to an explanation of the mission, vision and policies and procedures for the RSVP, volunteers will receive an orientation on internal systems in place including: volunteer applications; volunteer station Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs); forms; an outline of the expectations for both volunteers and volunteer stations; specific volunteer position descriptions; volunteer insurance; and training in using the volunteer handbook.

Experience Works RSVP will plan and host volunteer recognition and appreciation events quarterly to recognize the efforts of volunteers and promote the impact that the program is having in the community. Experience Works will invite a range of community leaders, locally elected officials, and past/current volunteers to help recognized volunteer efforts. The RSVP advisory committee, under the

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direction of Experience Works leaders, will have primary responsibility for planning and securing resources for volunteer recognition and appreciation efforts. Experience Works will leverage volunteer recognition events to recruit new volunteers, promote volunteerism in the community and build the capacity of the RSVP.

Early in PY 2013/2014 Experience Works launched the Diversity and Inclusion Workgroup, comprised of eight Experience Works staff members selected by a national committee. The individuals include five Employment and Training Coordinators, one State Program Manager, one Office Administrator, one member of the finance department from the National Office, and one member of the Customer Service Center. The effort promotes openness and sets the tone for an organizational culture of inclusiveness. The general approach is forward-looking and constructive. It aims to engage a wide range of stakeholders to identify ways to improve outreach and inclusion of special populations.

Experience Works will leverage the work of this group to ensure that recruitment strategies target a volunteer pool that is reflective of the service area. This will include: individuals from diverse races, ethnicities, sexual orientation, or degrees of English language proficiency; individuals with disabilities; and veterans and military family members.

RSVP Advisory Committee:

A high priority of the Experience Works RSVP program is to establish an advisory committee for each project that complies with all provisions of 45 CFR 2553.24. The advisory committee membership will include representatives: from organizations knowledgeable about the human and social needs of the community; competent in the field of community service and volunteerism; capable of helping Experience Works RSVP 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 committee will provide structure to ensure that program services are targeted toward meeting program needs and responding to the needs of the local service area. The Advisory committee will make recommendations to the RSVP program staff and provide ongoing support to address program operation needs and assist in planning and executing volunteer recognition. The advisory committee will offer a forum for program stakeholders (including community activists and locally

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elected officials); volunteers; volunteer stations; and beneficiaries of RSVP activities to communicate their opinions, share their expertise, coordinate services, act as a link between program operations, and support and represent the interests of the RSVP program within the service area.

The RSVP project staff will be responsible for establishing the purpose of the group, building the membership of the advisory committee and recruiting members that may include representatives of partner organizations, and facilitating regularly-scheduled meetings.

RSVP Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):

Experience Works RSVP will develop Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with all sponsor stations prior to assigning volunteers. Experience Works currently uses a template to develop "Host Agency Agreements" with SCSEP community service agencies. This template will be modified for use with the RSVP.

All MOUs will contain the contact information of the volunteer station; the number of volunteer assignments projected to be available with the organization; the name of the primary volunteer station staff member responsible for day-to-day supervision of RSVP volunteers and a description of their supervisory arrangements; volunteer station and Experience Works' contributions to support RSVP volunteers; volunteer station's responsibilities in relation to implementing programming for impact performance measurement(s); volunteer station agreement to provide required reports; provision of safety of the RSVP volunteers while on assignment; a listing of reimbursable costs that the volunteer may incur while on duty, and a listing of geographic locations/sites where RSVP volunteers will serve through the volunteer station.

The MOU with the volunteer station provides assurances that the station will not discriminate against RSVP volunteers, and ensures that the volunteer station will provide reasonable accommodation for volunteers with disabilities and will not engage participants in any political or religious activities prohibited by RSVP regulations.

Experience Works will execute the MOU signed by the RSVP station that lays out the general framework for roles and responsibilities of the RSVP volunteer and the RSVP volunteer station. Specific language in the MOU will identify and include the required direct day-to-day supervision

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negotiated between

Experience Works and the volunteer station. An MOU agreement will be executed before assigning a volunteer to a volunteer station.

Primary responsibility for the day-to-day supervision of volunteers will reside with the volunteer station supervisor. The supervision requirement is covered as part of the MOU, with specific language requiring direct day-to-day supervision by the volunteer station supervisor. The Experience Works RSVP staff will maintain regular contact with each volunteer station and RSVP volunteer to ensure that they are providing the supervision necessary for safe, productive, effective training, and to ensure that the station assignment complies with RSVP regulations and guidelines.

A station site Monitoring Checklist will be completed prior to a participant's placement at the volunteer station, and yearly thereafter. The RSVP staff will maintain regular contact with the RSVP volunteer and the volunteer station supervisor to observe the volunteer outputs, working conditions for safety and other issues during monitoring visits. When potential problems or violations are identified, Experience Works will notify the volunteer station supervisor of the issue or violation and monitor the volunteer station until the issue or violation is resolved.

Graduating Incumbent Volunteer Stations and Volunteers:

If awarded a 2015 RSVP grant for this service area, Experience Works will make every effort to minimize any disruption to volunteers in volunteer stations associated with the incumbent grantee. We will work hard to provide such volunteers with similar service opportunities in other volunteer stations, or other, similar service opportunities outside of the RSVP program. Alternatively, Experience Works may also convert some of the volunteer stations associated with the incumbent grantee into volunteer stations with an emphasis on capacity building activities such as recruiting and managing community volunteers. In that case, RSVP volunteer(s) associated with Experience Works will manage those stations associated with the incumbent grantee in a capacity building role, working to smooth the transition of existing RSVP volunteers at those sites into roles as community volunteers.

### **Program Management**

The Experience Works RSVP program will be managed centrally by a RSVP manager but delivered locally using RSVP coordinators and/or project staff. The program manager is responsible for ensuring that programs are delivering to budget and making progress against targets, as well as

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helping to plan for sustainability.

This service delivery model enables the local RSVP project to better focus on core activities. The RSVP manager will help implement processes, develop promotional material, oversee budgets, data collection and compliance with all program requirements.

Experience Works believes that this service delivery model will help address challenges as they occur, ensure that Experience Works's policies and procedures for RSVP projects are properly followed and the project remains compliant with federal regulations. The service delivery model provides the local RSVP projects with access to a broad array of technical expertise and experience, and an external team that maximizes flexibility, responsiveness and support in adapting to challenges through opportunities to share learning and good practice.

### **Organizational Capability**

Experience Works currently operates Federal- and state-funded SCSEP grants in 30 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as well as one RSVP project in Pennsylvania (PA-4X), awarded under the 2014 RSVP competition.

Responsibility for program direction, fiscal management, and monitoring resides at the national level. Our organization's structure consists of five main divisions: 1) Program Operations; 2) Finance; 3) Communications; 4) Payroll and Participant Administration; and 5) Information Technology (See organization chart submitted as an Attachment).

Note: In Program Year (PY) 2013, which ended June 30, 2014, Experience Works achieved 6 of 6 key performance measures in the Senior Community Service Program (SCSEP). Consequently, the U.S. Department of Labor awarded Experience Works an incentive award based on performance.

Experience Works is using those funds to develop a "Blended Learning Training Pilot Program" that we intend to leverage to ensure that smaller RSVP service areas that have limited budgets have virtual access to the same high-quality training, technical assistance support, and supervision available to other service areas. Through this high tech capability, Experience Works will have the capacity to connect RSVP projects regionally and nationally to share best practices and provide technical assistance via peer-to-peer support across RSVP projects.

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### Financial Policies and Procedures:

Experience Works uses a fully-integrated accounting system to support its financial needs, including Lawson platform general ledger, payroll, human resources, benefits, time accrual, accounts payable, billing, accounts receivable, and fixed assets modules. The finance division at the national office, under the direction of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), oversees funds management and budget allocation. Program managers are responsible for reviewing and approving invoices and submitting them online for payment.

Every financial transaction is entered into the general ledger system (GLTRAN). Allowable expenses are allocated to funding sources based on benefits derived on an accrual basis. Supporting documentation is traceable to every GLTRAN transaction and must be readily available for internal or external review and/or audit. Experience Works maintains job descriptions for all employees that clearly define responsibility and accountability for financial reporting.

All financial reporting must originate from the general ledger system and from no other source. Experience Works' finance department periodically reviews compliance with all financial reporting internal controls. Experience Works receives an annual external audit that reviews compliance, on a sample basis, with all financial reporting internal controls.

Experience Works receives an annual external audit that reviews compliance, on a sample basis, with all financial reporting internal controls as required by OMB Circular A-133. All of Experience Works's Federal and state financial reporting complies with grant-specific, Federal and State Regulations (OMB Circulars A-110, A-122, A-133, 29 CFR 95.21) and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles to ensure accurate, current and complete disclosure of all financial transactions. The Controller's office is responsible for ensuring that all required financial reporting is prepared, reviewed and filed on a timely basis based on reporting requirements specified in grant documents.

### Other

Ms. Sara VanderFeltz  
Federal Assistance Clearinghouse  
Office of Administration  
Commissioner's Office  
Capitol Building, Room 125

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Jefferson City, MO 65102

Dear Ms. VanderFeltz,

Enclosed are four Experience Works Grant Applications for 2015 Senior Corps RSVP Program Grants for projects in the State of Missouri (MO-1X, MO-2X, MO-3X, MO-4X). I am submitting these applications to you today, September 5, 2014, so as to allow the State of Missouri to exercise intergovernmental review authority over these projects, under EO12372, as is its legal right and stated prerogative in this case.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Tell

Experience Works Headquarters Program

**PNS Amendment (if applicable)**

N/A