

Narratives

Executive Summary

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If awarded this service opportunity, The Center for Youth and Family Solutions (CYFS), will be able to expand meaningful volunteer opportunities for those over the age of 55 within Peoria and Tazewell Counties, as well as providing critical services to target underserved populations and initiatives.

If the Illinois Opportunity #IL-2X is awarded to CYFS, we anticipate having a minimum of 165 volunteer participants providing an estimated 24,000 volunteer service hours, which according to the Independent Sector analysis reflects \$541,200 in in-kind services. Those numbers will certainly make a significant difference in the lives of older adults and others throughout the communities that we serve. We have six service activities identified in our work plan for this proposal: three addressing "Aging in Place" objectives, one in "K-12 Success", one in "At-Risk Ecosystems", and one for "Capacity Building and Leverage."

With our main focus area of Healthy Futures, a minimum of 41 volunteers (25%) will directly be impacting the lives of others by assisting the two counties' senior population with transportation to appointments, shopping for healthy foods, participation in exercise programs, other advocacy and support as needed, and with companionship that will help them stay connected, active, and engaged in their community. This effort will aid in keeping seniors successfully functioning independently in their own homes; and the objective of aging in place with community support will be a primary measured client outcome. Our longstanding experience and success with helping Seniors successfully maintain independence is a key reason that we feel CYFS is well positioned to administrate this grant. We have a proven 95% success rate in helping Seniors age in place in our state DHS and United Way funded Senior support program.

We will also be matching volunteers with opportunities to assist with food pantry support, as many of our area residents live below the poverty level making assisting local feeding programs and food distribution sites a critical and worthwhile project for the RSVP volunteers. The outcome goal here will be to measure success via client surveys to determine if people report experiencing less food insecurity.

Additionally, we will focus on Education by working with the various school districts in the area to

Narratives

reinforce and support basic educational development with a minimum of 50 tutors placed in area schools. We hope to see improved school attendance as well as improved grades, and will be measuring these outcomes in coordination with the school districts.

We will also be focusing on Environmental Stewardship, working with at risk eco-systems, by placing a minimum of 10 volunteers to improve the beauty of our trails that run through the local two county area. Volunteers will be picking up litter as well as planting flowers. Outcomes will be determined by the miles of trails that have been enhanced and improved.

Wee will be continually building capacity, by actively recruiting volunteers through multiple community outreach strategies as well as engaging new senior volunteers through existing RSVP volunteers who have had a positive experience. To achieve these goals we have emphasized specific plans for recruitment, training and retention. Funding for the RSVP Program will be provided by \$57,640 from the federal grant and will be supplemented with \$33,821 from a Department on Aging monies set aside specifically for the RSVP grant match. Additionally, there will be in kind professional service and other donations to support the project.

The Center for Youth and Family Solutions is well positioned to successfully administer the RSVP program in Peoria and Tazewell counties. Our agency provides critical services across Central Illinois to assist those whose lives have been touched by trauma, grief and loss, and other significant life challenges. Our volunteer program currently coordinates the recruitment, orientation, training, retention, quality improvement and risk management over 250 volunteers annually. The Center for Youth and Family Solutions has an established presence serving both Tazewell and Peoria counties in senior services, food distribution, youth after-school education and intervention, as well as collaborative relationships with potential RSVP volunteer stations in both counties.

Strengthening Communities

Strengthening Communities:

Located amidst rich farmland with four remarkable seasonal changes and thriving natural habitats near a major waterway, Peoria and Tazewell Counties are blessed with all facets of human and eco-diversity. Along the picturesque country side, 20% of our area population lives in rural farming communities or quaint villages, and 80% live in urban areas. According to a 2013 US Census Bureau report, the combined county estimated population of 324,781 is comprised of 71% Caucasian, 19%

Narratives

African American, 6% Latino, and 3.8 % Asian populations which creates a diverse culture. Just as diverse as our population is our work force, with our area's largest employers being Caterpillar, OSF HealthCare System, Unity Point Methodist, Aventine Renewable Energy, Inc. and Wal-Mart. These employers hire a wide range of workers, with the full spectrum of educational, technical, age, skills, and life and professional experiences.

The recovery of our nations great recession in the new millennium has been slow in the heart of Illinois and lagged behind the national trend. The national unemployment rate in April of 2014 was 6.3% while here in Peoria county 7.6% of our community members remained out of work. According to the Heartland Alliance annual report, our poverty rate in Peoria hovers around 20%, with a vast majority of those living in poverty being single mothers. The Tazewell County poverty rate is at 7.6%. Our senior population in the two counties represents 15% of the population (48,717) of which 7% (3410) live in poverty using "official" poverty level metrics. The more realistic Kaiser Foundation analysis indicates that 15% of Seniors (65+) in Illinois are living in poverty using supplemental poverty level metrics. As the poverty rate for all adults (19-64) in Illinois is 18%, the supplemental poverty rate for Seniors age (55+) is likely even higher than the 15% for (65+).

Our need to continue and improve the various safety nets provided by our human services organization is essential. The growing needs of seniors go beyond simple economic metrics. According to the Heart of Illinois United Way, 30 percent of seniors who live alone deal with depression, isolation and thoughts of suicide; 1 in 3 low-income seniors struggle with basic needs. In today's mobile society many of our senior citizens are living alone with limited or no family support nearby.

To address this community need The Center for Youth and Family Solutions has successfully operated New Day, a longstanding support program for seniors with a 95% aging in place success rate. This program is dedicated to the goals of keeping seniors in their homes, living independently and contributing to their communities. These goals are achieved by offering free-in home counseling along with a Friendly Visitor Program. The program is staffed by Counselors with over 25 years of experience in the field and supported by both state DHS funding and United Way funding. The Friendly Visitor Program component is a community based all-volunteer program that is involved in transporting seniors to appointments, shopping with or for seniors, going for walks, or spending time listening and sharing stories.

Narratives

The Center for Youth and Family Solutions collaborates with others who share a common mission to serve our local seniors with dignity and respect. Not only will our Friendly Visitor program be able to expand its reach with this RSVP grant, but other providers working with seniors will benefit from RSVP volunteer recruitment efforts as well. Some of the partners with The Center for Youth and Family Solutions who work together to serve the area's senior population include the following: The Area Agency on Aging, The Center for Prevention of Abuse, South Side Mission, the Peoria Citizen's Committee for Economic Development's Fostering Grandparents program, Prairie State Legal Services, Proctor Hospital, OSF Hospital, OSF College of Nursing, Methodist Hospital, Heartland Health Care, Heart of Illinois United Way, the Department of Human Services, Miller Senior Center, Peoria Transit Authority, Pekin Park District, Peoria Park District, Peoria Center for the Blind, Tazewell County Resource Center, The Human Service Center, Neighborhood House, Meals on Wheels Program, and Senior Independent Living facilities. A few examples of our current activities with these partners include referrals to our in-home counseling program, volunteers providing education on exercise at the Miller Senior Center, and OSF College of Nursing students who earn volunteer credit by providing health education and medical assessments to seniors in their own homes. Many of our partners rely on valuable volunteers and they would be able to reach even more seniors in need with this RSVP award as we expand our community's opportunities for seniors helping seniors.

The other main focus area that will strengthen our local communities is Education. According to a Heart of Illinois United Way 2014 Community Assessment Report, both Peoria and Tazewell Counties are experiencing a truancy rate well over the state average of 9.8% with Peoria at 24.5 % and East Peoria at 18%. Of major concern is a 71% HS graduation rate in School District 150 in Peoria compared to a state average of 84%. We would work with local school districts and other educational programs, such as Common Place and Success by Six, matching RSVP volunteers to work with students to increase achievement and attendance, as well as to model their excitement for education and the positive role it plays in each student's life and path to success. Semiannual measurements of progress will be obtained through surveys, and school records to capture success of each student with a RSVP volunteer.

Recruitment and Development

Recruitment/development:

Narratives

The Center for Youth and Family Solutions brings considerable experience in the development, implementation, coordination, and evaluation of volunteer programs. Last year, our volunteer program coordinated community outreach, recruitment, screening, orientation and risk management for over 22,000 volunteer hours across 37 counties.

Recruitment and development for volunteer engagement has many facets. Our first goal would be to get the word out about RSVP. Several of our partners in Peoria and Tazewell counties hold various health and informational fairs throughout the year; we would plan on attending these fairs and promoting involvement in that particular community through RSVP. In addition to reaching out to established partners and potential new partners, as the sponsoring agency The Center for Youth and Family Solutions will hold quarterly recruitment meetings regarding RSVP. These meetings will be informational in nature including the benefits of being an RSVP volunteer, and providing information on each of the stations/agencies that have a volunteer opportunities, as well as beginning discussions about finding the best match for each individual. Meeting announcements will be placed in the Peoria Journal Star in the Volunteer Section, in other community newspapers throughout the county, as well as on local radio stations. Announcements for these meetings would also be placed in local businesses and churches that have community bulletin boards. The Center for Youth and Family Solutions currently partners with many area churches of diverse denominations for various outreach opportunities, and would be able to approach these partners successfully for permission to post information in their bulletins or on bulletin boards.

Social media and online marketing also plays a significant role in recruitment today and a well-rounded social media approach including website, Facebook, email blasts, and e-newsletters will also be used to share meeting information, list volunteer opportunities, and engage interested seniors. The Center for Youth and Family Solutions is experienced in using all of these platforms to promote current services.

Another critical component of program development will be ongoing attention to building additional relationships with organizations that could benefit from RSVP volunteers and increasing the volunteer opportunities and choices for interested seniors. For example, we will be working on developing Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with community organizations such as the Peoria Botanical Garden, Peoria Zoo and Wildlife Prairie Park, and Illinois Community College that hold

Narratives

informational meetings about their organizations where we could distribute information about RSVP and place volunteers. With these various methods of communication, our recruitment process will reach a wide ranging and diverse population, and result in engaging interested residents of both counties. In the development of a specialized quarterly newsletter for the RSVP program we will focus in on highlighting all the various partner organizations with MOUs and what their specific needs for volunteers would be. We would also be listed in the Council on Aging Newsletter, and listed in local magazines including "Healthy Cells" and "50 Plus News and Views". Identified additional needed training will be addressed in the quarterly newsletter and a portion of the quarterly meetings held at The Center for Youth and Family Solutions will be dedicated to addressing training concerns.

Also, offering a variety of meaningful volunteer opportunities, a planned method of consistent feedback, and an attentive and responsive experience for each volunteer will be key to our volunteers to spread the good word about the opportunity associated with RSVP.

Retention of volunteers is instrumental in any successful volunteer program. The best method of retention is to ensure that the volunteers and their assigned stations know that they are making a difference, that they are helping the agency/station in fulfilling their mission, and that there is an ongoing dialogue and contact with the volunteer. Through semiannual surveys, either face to face, through the mail or via phone, RSVP staff will connect with each volunteer and the volunteer station to make sure that everyone's experience is going smoothly. Verbal positive reinforcement, as well as a thank you notes for service or a birthday card on a volunteer's birthday tell the volunteer that we appreciate them as a person as well as for the service that they are performing. Sharing data results from surveys gathered from individual or stations served is also key and will be done quarterly at RSVP meetings. An annual luncheon for all volunteers and volunteer stations also aids in retention as volunteers can gather, share experiences and be a part of the bigger picture of success. This gathering will take place at the sponsors location and as many business supporters as possible will be asked to donate items to make it a real celebration.

Most importantly, our vast experience over several decades in these very communities managing 250 volunteers and over 50 undergraduate and graduate Interns providing over 22,000 hours of volunteer service annually is a key factor in our belief we are well suited to administrate the RSVP grant. We know how to recruit, engage, and maintain volunteers in meaningful roles.

Narratives

Program Management

Program Management

Management of this program will include administrative oversight by the Center for Youth and Family Solutions Volunteer Coordinator who has over 10 years experience in volunteer management and will serve as the RSVP overall Program Coordinator. A dedicated RSVP Project Director will be hired that has experience in both supervision as well as volunteering in their community. A newly created Advisory Board, which will be comprised of current Center for Youth and Family Solutions Friendly Visitor volunteers, community agency partners, RSVP volunteers and the RSVP Director will meet quarterly and will be instrumental in reviewing outcomes and feedback, identifying areas of opportunity for improvement, and sharing ideas for making positive changes. This group will also be responsible for reviewing the activities and allocation of resources of RSVP to ensure that it is meeting the program goals.

The Center for Youth and Family Solutions (CYFS), as the sponsor agency, will also provide expert oversight on financial operations and assumes all responsibility for fiduciary management and program audits. The accounting department at CYFS has decades of experience in working with contracts from various state programs such as Illinois DHS and DCFS, grants from over 20 United Ways throughout their service area, as well as federal pass through or matching fund programs. Throughout the grant operation, the Project Director of RSVP will be the centralized resource for the various Human Service Agencies, Public Parks, School districts and other locations that have RSVP volunteer placements to ensure consistent development of RSVP volunteer station programs and quality volunteer experiences.

To become a station of RSVP the mission and general ethical practices must be aligned with the sponsor agency's mission and code of ethics as well as the mission and ethical practices outlined in the RSVP handbook. Each location will be required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). A semiannual assessment, by staff of RSVP, will be used to determine if the station is complying with their MOU agreements as well as to assess if RSVP is excelling at assisting the MOU agencies in meeting their mission and goals. This assessment will be in the form of surveys conducted primarily face to face, but also through the email, online, or by phone.

Narratives

Those volunteering will also be asked routinely for their input on their service and experience. This input will be gathered by ongoing face to face discussion with our volunteers at their work stations, as well as semiannual surveys either face to face, through email, online, or by phone. If a station or a volunteer is not living up to their commitments, it will be the responsibility of the Project Director and the leaders of the station to resolve those issues. Any identified changes that need to be made will be followed up by the Project Director and appropriate action will be taken to address the issue. In the case of identified issues with the station, if after reasonable efforts have been made to resolve the concern a determination is made the station is unwilling or unable to make the necessary change, or if the station is not aligned with the mission/ethics of RSVP, then the MOU will be terminated. In the case of an issue with a volunteer, feedback will be given and the volunteer will be engaged in a process of issue resolution. When warranted, a change within the station or placement with another volunteer station will be considered. In rare situations when an issue is severe or cannot be resolved, the volunteer will be asked to terminate their relationship with RSVP.

We live in an ever changing world and as our world and our community evolves so do our community needs. In order to be responsive to changing needs, The Center for Youth and Family Solutions in partnership with United Way, other Human Service Providers, and our RSVP volunteers will share information regarding both the ongoing and evolving needs in our service areas. This input is extremely valuable in determining the direction of present volunteer stations and in setting up new stations. Through our RSVP newsletter, our quarterly Advisory Board meetings, and our RSVP volunteer meetings these changing needs in the community will be discussed, ideas for development of new opportunities will be shared, and new volunteer opportunities will be announced. The Center for Youth and Family Solutions operates with an understanding that when organizations engage stakeholders, involves all participants in identifying the need for change, and solicits their input in how change is implemented, then change happens much easier. This will be another key element in the retention of RSVP volunteers.

Another key to success in program management is quality training. Each individual that becomes a volunteer for RSVP will be trained individually or as a part of a small group on the RSVP mission, critical policies and procedures including reporting hours and cultural diversity, as well as general information on the agency that they will volunteer for. Trainings will also be offered on specialized topics regarding the senior population, such as depression, isolation, and general health issues,

Narratives

sponsored by The Center for Youth and Family Solutions and their partnering agencies. Any additional training needs requested by volunteers or participating agencies will be addressed and appropriate facilitators will be asked to present the training. Funding for these trainings will be provided through in-kind donations of participating stations' staff time, and state funding through the Illinois Department on Aging. The Advisory Board along with the Project Director will review the trainings quarterly to make sure that volunteer needs, as well as agency needs are being met.

Finally, it is critical that RSVP volunteers know they are appreciated and enjoy the sense of belonging to a RSVP organization that makes a difference. To address this, we will gather all RSVP volunteers and representatives from our MOU agencies annually for a Volunteer Recognition Celebration. Funding for this project would be acquired through the Illinois Department on Aging and other private donations and in-kind donations.

Again, our successful experience in supporting and retaining over 250 volunteers providing 22,000+ hours of service will be a key asset for the RSVP program success.

Organizational Capability

Organizational Capability-

The Center for Youth and Family Solutions provides critical services designed to assist those whose lives have been touched by trauma, grief and loss, and other significant life challenges. With an annual budget of approximately \$25 million, the agency served over 20,000 people in 37 counties this year. The Center for Youth and Family Solutions' extensive administrative and program experience, and our presence and experience serving both Tazewell and Peoria counties in senior services, food distribution, youth after-school education and intervention, and volunteer programs makes us uniquely qualified to facilitate the RSVP program in these two counties.

Our collaborative and accountability based approach and our experienced professional staff make the biggest difference in how we provide all services. We compassionately partner with individuals and families to help them reach their goals and create positive change. We are committed to providing programs and interventions that work and we demonstrate the effectiveness of our services by measuring and sharing our outcomes with stakeholders.

Narratives

As such, the RSVP program will be monitored, and administered by the sponsoring agency's (CYFS) Volunteer Coordinator, who has over ten years experience in working with volunteers. She will also serve as the designated RSVP Program Coordinator. There will then be a full time RSVP Project Director, and a part time clerical support position providing administrative assistance.

The CYFS Accounting department will provide fiduciary management and audit assistance as noted. The CYFS Continuous Quality Improvement department (CQI) can assist in measuring participant and client outcomes. Finally, the RSVP Advisory Board which we will develop from current volunteers of The Center for Youth and Family Solutions, (CYFS) community partners and new RSVP volunteers will provide input on the program functioning.

The CYFS Volunteer Coordinator/RSVP Program Coordinator will be the direct supervisor of the RSVP Project Director. This position, in addition to supervising the RSVP Project Director, will also coordinate the flow of information regarding RSVP to the assisting programs/departments at CYFS, i.e. Accounting, IT, HR, CQI, New Day Senior Program, as well as the Chief Operating Officer, the Executive Director, and the CYFS Board of Directors. The RSVP Coordinator, along with the Executive Director, will act as the liaison between the Agency's Board of Directors and RSVP. As requested, the RSVP Coordinator will attend and report information at Board meetings to ensure an open line of communication regarding any fiduciary or legal oversight by the Board.

The Center for Youth and Family Solutions, has proven its capacity to provide structured, legal, transparent accounting practices along with outcome based programs to a large service area. This transparency has been documented through continual contracts with various state programs, multiple United Way grants, external audits by state code departments and independent audits conducted by certified public accounting firm Clifton Larson Allen.

We will hire a Project Director who will be an independent worker, knowledgeable about issues concerning the senior population, possess previous supervisory experience and experience as a community volunteer.

The Project Director will ultimately be responsible for the daily workings of the RSVP program. The Project Director will assist in recruiting, training, and recording activity of volunteers as well as

Narratives

actively seeking out partner volunteer stations. He/she will also be responsible for monitoring the budget and ensuring it meets or exceeds the required standards. The Project Director will also be responsible for ensuring that the mission and ethics of the partner stations/agencies are aligned with the mission and ethics of both CYFS and RSVP. This will be accomplished by periodic visits to the sites, surveys, and engaging in direct conversation with our RSVP volunteers. Additionally, the Project Director will be responsible for ensuring that all volunteers are adhering to the guidelines, policies and procedures of RSVP. These duties will be supported by additional clerical staff who will be responsible for data entry of hours, record keeping for MOU's and other duties as assigned.

The Advisory Board will meet quarterly to review the accomplishments of the program, specifically in the identified focus areas, and the activities of RSVP volunteers and RSVP stations. Reports from the Project Director regarding the overall financial, service delivery, and outcomes status of the program will also be reviewed. This information along with the semiannual surveys will be used to inform discussion and guide decision making regarding any necessary changes to ensure that the goals of Healthy Futures are being met. CYFS will work to ensure this Advisory group, through its engagement in the community, will be aware of trends and emerging community needs that RSVP may be able to address through program expansion.

In summary, our vast experience over several decades in these very communities managing 250 volunteers and over 50 undergraduate and graduate Interns providing over 22,000 hours of volunteer service annually is a key factor in our belief we are well suited to administrate the RSVP grant. We know how to recruit, engage, and maintain volunteers in meaningful roles.

Other

Not applicable

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

Not applicable