

Narratives

Executive Summary

The Prince George's County, Maryland Department of Family Services is the legal applicant for the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) grant #MD-02. The mission of the Department of Family Services is to ensure the provision of comprehensive and responsive community-based services that enhance the quality of life for individuals and families that strengthen the Prince George's County community. The local RSVP program is housed in the Department of Family Services Aging and Disabilities Services Division which also serves as the local Area Agency on Aging.

For the purposes of this grant application, an estimated 500 RSVP volunteers will serve through approximately 53 host sites. Some of their activities will include food delivery, transportation, companionship, distributing information, and staffing a hotline. The primary focus of this grant application is Healthy Futures. As a result of the activities of the volunteers, at the end of the three-year grant period, seniors will feel less isolated and have increased social ties to the community. The total budget for this project is \$139,377, the Corporation for National and Community Service federal investment is \$66,601 and the grantee contribution is \$72,776.

The service categories selected are a direct result of identified community needs to increase opportunities for older adults to receive information about services and programs and participate in activities that will promote their well being. As a result of meeting these needs, the volunteers will help to build and restore a sense of community in the County.

Strengthening Communities

RSVP Performance Measure Requirements

Requirement 1: At a minimum, a total of 190 volunteers (38%) will be included in work plans that result in outcomes.

Requirement 2: At a minimum, a total of 217 volunteers (43%) will be assigned to the CNCS Focus Area of "Healthy Futures."

Requirement 3: A maximum of 93 volunteers (19%) will be assigned to community priorities.

Strengthening Communities Narrative

Prince George's County, Maryland is comprised of 488 miles with an estimated population totaling more than 890,000 according to the United States Census Bureau, 2013 population estimate. This population total has risen significantly since 2010, when data indicated that the number of residents was 863,420 and that was reflective of a 7.7% increase since 2000 (USA.COM

Narratives

<http://www.usa.com/prince-georges-county-md.htm>).

Minorities comprise approximately 73% of the total population in Prince George's County according to the 2013 US Census estimate. In addition, almost 20% of the population speaks a language other than English at home and 20% were born in another country. The median household income for the County is \$73,568 according to the US Census. Data shows that the majority of senior citizens ages 65 years of age and older are living above the poverty level, with about 6.8% living below or near poverty levels. (American Community Survey, 2010 -- 2012). This same data-set shows that about half of senior citizens age 65 and older are un-married, with another third that are widowed. Of the non-institutionalized population 60 years of age and over, 27.4% reported having a disability.

Additionally, there are 62,430 veterans residing in the County.

The primary focus area selected for this grant application is Healthy Futures. The objectives under this initiative include Aging in Place, Obesity and Food, and Access to Care. The Department of Family Services Aging and Disabilities Services Division plans and administers services and programs that allow older adults and persons with disabilities to age in place in the least restricted environment. A component of being able to age in place is to increase social interaction and connection to social supports. A major goal of the Department and the County Executive is to increase the number of older adults who are able to remain in their homes after one year of receiving community services. As the 85 year and older cohort continues to grow, the Department seeks ways to provide comprehensive services allowing older adults to remain in their homes thus reducing institutional care. At present the 85 and older cohort has grown 27.58% since the 2000 census and is currently 7.5 percent of the population 60 years of age and over. This is the segment of the population that is frailer, more vulnerable and more likely to live alone. RSVP volunteers will perform service activities of the Healthy Futures focus area by providing home delivered meals, transportation services, and companionship through telephone calls (Telephone Reassurance).

The majority of RSVP volunteers will provide services that include food delivery and distribution. The volunteers will deliver a hot nutritious meal to homebound older adults daily. Not only is a meal delivered but each homebound resident receives a visit from a volunteer who provides social interaction. In addition to the visits, volunteers also make friendly phone calls to recipients in the meal program. These telephone calls help to further increase social ties once one becomes frailer and no longer able to leave their home. In addition to meal delivery, volunteers also provide transportation services to doctor visits for those who can no longer drive.

As stated in the work plans, the RSVP expects to serve approximately 800 people under the objective

Narratives

Aging in Place. The services provided under this Objective include food delivery, transportation and companionship. In addition, it is anticipated that surveyed program participants will report increased feelings of social ties and experience support from their interaction with the RSVP volunteers.

Currently there are a total of 103,695 Medicare beneficiaries in Prince George's County. Of that number, 18,817 are elderly Medicare beneficiaries 65 years of age and older. When we break down the County's 60 years of age and older population by age groups, the data shows the most rapid rate of increase in the 65-74 age group and the 85 and over age groups. The 65-74 age cohort increased by 12.56 percent between 2010-2012. The increase in the 65-74 age groups reflects the aging of the baby boomer cohort; the older boomers (born in 1946) reached age 66 in 2012. This group will be applying for Medicare benefits and seeking information to assist them with making informed choices regarding their healthcare coverage. Trained volunteers will answer telephone calls and make presentations to assist this population in making effective healthcare decisions.

The RSVP staff monitors program performance monthly and uses this data to make necessary adjustments to ensure that goals and outcomes are met. A RSVP Advisory Council has been established to review annual project assessments regarding volunteer and host station satisfaction, and to determine to what extent goals and objectives are met. This review of annual projects also provides guidance for the remainder of the grant cycle.

The RSVP currently uses a data collection reporting system, Volunteer Reporter. During 2012, the data collection reporting system was upgraded to the 6.1 version, which provides an array of quality improvements and changes that make managing the volunteers more efficient. Between 2015 and 2018, system updates and maintenance will take place as needed so that the program data collection is as efficient as possible.

Through the use of the newly updated Volunteer Reporter system, the program is experiencing more accurate data collection on a monthly and annual basis. The system calculates hours, mileage, and meal reimbursements for each active volunteer. The Volunteer Reporter software also records the names of partners, type of business or service, the number of volunteers, host stations, jobs assignments, and service hours performed. The RSVP staff can use this data to identify trends, track retention, plan for future volunteer recruitment, and evaluate the need for additional volunteer stations.

The RSVP will also use activity logs developed by host sites and surveys to assess program objectives. Activity logs will be used to determine if service activity goals are met. In addition, surveys will be used to track outcomes developed under the Health Futures, Aging in Place initiatives.

Narratives

The RSVP has sought to support the County Executive's Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative (TNI). The purpose of this initiative is to achieve the County Executive's vision for a County with a thriving economy, great schools, safe neighborhoods, and high quality healthcare. There are six (6) neighborhoods that have been targeted as a result of facing significant economic, health, public safety, and educational challenges. These six (6) areas include East Riverdale/Bladensburg, Hillcrest Heights/Marlow Heights, Langley Park, Glassmanor/Oxon Hill, Kentland/Palmer Park, and Suitland/Coral Hills. The RSVP currently has volunteers in two (2) of the targeted areas; Bladensburg and Suitland. The volunteers in the Bladensburg TNI provide individuals transportation to doctor's visits and assist with meal delivery. The Suitland TNI volunteers provide service hours at the local public library. In the immediate future, the RSVP will remain focused on expanding its volunteer services into the remaining TNI communities, especially as it pertains to promoting the importance of socialization and healthy lifestyles.

Recruitment and Development

The Prince George's County Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) Advisory Committee, Host Station representatives, and the Area Agency on Aging will continue working toward identifying and providing high quality experiences for the approximately 500 RSVP volunteers. In order to assure a continued high quality experience, the RSVP will utilize a pre and post survey with volunteers on an annual basis for the purpose of assessing their experience in the program. Feedback will be used to make necessary adjustments and, where needed, prompt the seeking of technical assistance.

Volunteers will be asked to respond to questions that will identify how their volunteer experience has impacted their lives. Additionally, questions will seek to determine whether or not any new skills were learned and if they are volunteering in positions that have led to leadership roles in the organization where they serve.

Once volunteers are recruited and before they are assigned to their respective host site(s), they participate in an orientation using the RSVP Volunteer Handbook as a guide. Below is the Prince George's County, MD RSVP Volunteer Handbook training outline that is provided to all volunteers, prior to being assigned to a host station.

I. Volunteer Welcome Letter

II. RSVP Background

III. RSVP & the Department of Family Services -- Area Agency on Aging

IV. Community Need

Narratives

V. The RSVP Community Advisory Committee

VI. Joining RSVP

VII. Placement

VIII. Volunteer Opportunities

IX. Time Reporting

X. Recording Hours Worked

XI. Insurance Benefits

XII. Other Benefits

XIII. RSVP Volunteer Station Responsibilities

XIV. Safety Requirements

XV. Grievances

XVI. Volunteers with Disabilities

XVII. Dear Potential Volunteer

During the orientation training session, detailed information is shared to give the volunteers a true sense as to what they are about to embark upon. Ongoing support and training is provided to ensure that the volunteers remain abreast of innovative approaches and proven best practices.

The RSVP Advisory Committee and staff together provide host station training which includes orientation of new host station supervisors. This orientation is designed to provide an all-inclusive overview that address issues and answer questions that typically occur for volunteers. During this training the host stations staff identify the type of candidates needed for volunteer staff positions. Additionally, they provide advice and insight on trends they see affecting County seniors and discuss potential opportunities for collaboration on projects to assist their agencies and the community.

With regard to recruitment, a variety of approaches will be taken. The County has a large Veteran's population and is seeking to expand County services to include a local Veterans office that will be co-located in our current Camp Springs location, under the leadership of the Department of Family Services. It is anticipated that the addition of the County Veterans program will allow for increased opportunities to promote the RSVP program. In addition, the program is seeking to outreach to the Latino community in order to attract seniors with diverse backgrounds. The County has hired a liaison to the Latino Community to address opportunities that are available through County Government. In alignment with expanded outreach efforts, an electronic registration form has been established on the County's website. The Prince George's County local cable network and

Narratives

neighborhood newspapers will be used for the programs recruitment efforts. The RSVP endeavors to better utilize community organizations and institutions to promote its program, such as the Senior Adult Growing through Community Education (SAGE) advertisement publication. The SAGE advertisement, published by the Prince George's Community College is an effective marketing tool reaching more than 5,000 households of people age 55 years of age and older. This marketing medium has resulted in a great number of calls and inquiries regarding volunteer opportunities.

The RSVP also partners with the County's Memorial Library System to utilize its kiosks to distribute information regarding volunteer opportunities. Through these efforts, volunteers from an array of different backgrounds have been recruited. There are former teachers, nurses, lawyers, social and hospital workers, law enforcement officers, librarians, nutritionists, nursing home and assisted living advocates, and caregivers. They bring a wide variety of experiences to their respective service assignments.

The importance of communicating the benefits of volunteerism is paramount. This will be reiterated through formal presentations and informational sessions with populations not currently served. One means of accomplishing this task will be through the program staff and Advisory Committee quarterly meetings in order to assist with ongoing needs assessments to determine the type of volunteers needed, develop and revise retention and recruitment efforts, and align job descriptions to meet demand. The RSVP team remains committed to seeking ways to evaluate training needs for the purpose of building new skills, leadership potential, and reflecting on the meaning of service to the residents of Prince George's County. Additionally, the Advisory Committee will continue to assist with planning the yearly Host Station supervisory training to ensure that the volunteers understand job duties, roles, and responsibilities. The Host Station Supervisors will understand the importance of training and technical assistance to volunteers resulting in successful service and retention.

A key to a successful RSVP, program is volunteers and Host Station Supervisors receiving continuous encouragement and training in order support the development and fostering of good partnerships. The Program staff is encouraged to attend national and local conferences and workshops that teach and enhance skills on volunteer management. Host Station Supervisors are invited to attend an annual training where guest speakers discuss topics on managing people, motivation techniques, as well as how to administer the RSVP in their organization. The annual host site training is also an opportunity for host sites to network with one another to discuss the value to volunteers in their respective organizations.

Annually in May, a Volunteer Recognition Luncheon is held to honor all of the RSVP volunteers and

Narratives

is attended by the County Executive. This annual luncheon is a day set aside by the County to say thank you to the volunteers for their service. At this event, three (3) volunteer awards are presented for Outstanding Service, Outstanding New Volunteer, and Volunteer Leadership. In addition to the special awards, each volunteer receives a thank you gift and certificate of appreciation. Also, an Annual Appreciation Luncheon is held for Host Stations where training is provided, speakers talk about the importance of volunteering, and breakout sessions are conducted to discuss special topics, issues and concerns pertaining to the volunteer job.

All of RSVP's recruitment and development efforts will help produce benefits that will not only create new volunteer jobs and host station opportunities, but will equip the volunteer force with the skills and tools needed to bring about positive changes in Prince George's County. These efforts will also help the staff to achieve its focus area goals by providing new technological skills through on the job training all while helping volunteers to enhance their own lives.

Program Management

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) Project Director is responsible for carrying out program coordination in accordance with the guidelines established by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). These responsibilities include new initiatives and expansion projects, developing the RSVP plan, budget preparation, and ensuring that the volunteer files are accurate and up-to-date. The Project Director also provides oversight of recruitment, training, placement and retention of all volunteers' records, and prepares and maintains program planning and statistical reports. To ensure that the RSVP project is in compliance with RSVP program regulations, the Project Director meets annually with Host Station supervisors to go over the rules and regulations as established by the Corporation for National and Community Service to identify and prevent prohibited activities. In addition, site visits are made to host stations at minimum annually and more frequently as needed to discuss volunteer placement and any concerns from the host site or Project Director.

The RSVP Project Director monitors program performance monthly and makes the necessary adjustments so that goals and outcomes are met. A RSVP Advisory Council has been established to review annual project assessments regarding customer satisfaction and to determine to what extent goals and objects are met. This review of annual projects also provides guidance for the remainder of the grant cycle.

Furthermore, the Project Director develops a wide range of community service assignment opportunities for senior citizens who are willing to share their experiences, abilities, and skills to help build better communities.

Narratives

The Project Director ensures that volunteer assignments are consistent with the interests and abilities of the volunteers and the needs of the community. The Project Director schedules meetings with each new volunteer to determine their skill set and their areas of interest in volunteering over the next one (1), two (2), or three (3) years. A database of opportunities in the community is used to determine which host site will be the most appropriate placement for the volunteer. The volunteer and host site supervisor meet and feedback is exchanged between the host site and the volunteer to ensure that there is a good match.

Prince George's County established a data tracking system called "County Stat" about three years ago. Through this mechanism, goals are established as well as input, output, efficiency, and outcome measures. The Department of Family Services Aging and Disabilities Services Division including the RSVP program participates in this process. The Aging and Disabilities Services Division has begun to measure the effects of administering programs that keep older adults in their homes after receiving one year of County services. We have determined that after one year, 97% of participants are still in their own homes. The service that is received to keep persons in their homes are home delivered meals. The RSVP volunteers who participate in the home delivered meals programs are an integral part of the success of keeping older adults in their homes and communities for as long as possible, while reducing social isolation.

To ensure that the RSVP is in compliance with federal regulations, there is an established Advisory Committee that utilizes the Corporation for National and Community Services' (CNCS) Check List Survey Assessment Tool to assess the appropriateness of current RSVP programs and potential enhancements that impact the community. Review of the assessment and feedback from the Advisory Committee will continue assisting the RSVP to identify and clarify community needs. This data will also enable the committee and staff to evaluate programming and target areas of need for the potential development of new and more effective work plans, and to determine those to be revised or deleted. The RSVP Advisory Committee is comprised of seven (7) members representing the Board of Education, Prince George's Community College, the Prince George's County Retired Teachers Association; in addition there is a former school teacher, and members from local non-profits. Further, the feedback will better equip staff to select community partners and to more efficiently determine their roles.

In addition to the steps taken by the Advisory Committee, the RSVP project requires all new host sites to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that is provided by the RSVP project in accordance with guidelines established by the CNCS. A volunteer is not placed until the MOU is appropriately

Narratives

signed and returned. In addition, all volunteers must complete a registration form before they can be placed in a host site and proof of age is required.

Organizational Capability

The Prince George's County Department of Family Services is in the 44th year of administrating the RVSP grant. Managing volunteer programs is a long tradition of the Department of Family Services. In addition to the local funding that it received for the RVSP, the Department of Family Services also manages in excess of \$10 million dollars in federal funds. These funds include funding from the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Labor.

The Unit Manager and Project Director provide oversight to the program and ensure meaningful volunteer and host station opportunities for the senior citizens that endeavor to provide volunteer services to their communities. Volunteer services presently have 53 host station partners and approximately 500 volunteers located throughout Prince George's County. The host stations are located in private companies, non-profit organizations, government agencies, independent living and other facilities as well as faith-based community organizations.

The Department works closely with the County's Office of Human Resources Management to ensure that it has met the requirements of the grant by developing specific position descriptions for all staff in accordance with the County's Personnel Law. The Department also works with the County's Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Finance, and when necessary, the Office of Audits and Investigations. This collaboration maintains the fiscal prudence of the program. The Department's financial management systems is comprised of several accounting software programs that enable the Department to separately track grant expenditures and draw down funds. Financial records are subject to be audited on an annual basis through an external Single Audit of the County and/or by internal audits conducted by the County's Office of Audits and Investigations.

The RSVP Project Director works under the supervision of the Area Agency on Aging Planner and Unit Manager for Employment and Volunteer Services. In addition, the Project Director solicits support from volunteers to assist with administrative tasks for the program. This position falls under the supervision of the aforementioned areas as RSVP is housed within the Department of Family Services' Aging and Disabilities Services Division, which serves as the local Area Agency on Aging (AAA). Within the Department of Family Services is the Management Services Division that is responsible for assisting in budget development, tracking expenditures, and providing monthly fiscal reports. In addition the Management Services Division manages capital assets such as facilities,

Narratives

equipment and supplies. There is a budget analyst that is assigned to the AAA who works closely with the Unit Manager and RSVP Project Director to assure that resources are being tracked and managed appropriately. The analyst provides monthly expenditure reports that are reviewed by the Unit Manager and Project Director. This process assures that the project stays within the approved budget and that funds are properly allocated.

The RSVP is under the direction of the Project Director and has part-time clerical support of a Senior Aide from the Senior Community Employment Program (SCSEP). The Project Director, Pamela Sharps, is under the supervision of the Planner and Unit Manager for Employment and Volunteer Services and Acting Division Manager for the Aging and Disabilities Services Division who is Karen Sylvester. Theresa Grant, Acting Director of the Department of Family Services and Area Agency on Aging Director oversees all of the programs under Aging Services. Paul Haring, Budget Management Analyst, is assigned to the RSVP to provide fiscal and administration support through the Department's Management Services Division.

The Project Director undergoes formal Past Performance Appraisals (PPA) annually to systematically determine the degree in which the program goals and objectives are met as determined by the grant application and work-plans. The staff is encouraged during the appraisal period to conduct a self-evaluation and meet with their supervisor to determine if goals have been met and discuss new ideas for improvement of the program and personal work performance.

Pamela Sharps who is the current Project Director for the RSVP has worked with the Aging and Disabilities Services Division for 10 years. She served as a Long Term Care Ombudsman advocating for nursing home and assisted living residents before assuming the role as the RSVP Project Director. Additionally, Ms. Sharps has been involved in extensive project management, customer and emergency care, telecommunications, and non-profit community services experiences.

The Prince George's County Department of Family Services, Aging and Disabilities Services Division, of which the RSVP is a functioning entity, has established internal controls and performance measures to facilitate proper grant management. These include organizational policies, utilization of information systems and accounting programs, trained staff, and program coordination. In addition, there is the monitoring of the fiscal statuses of grants, the ensuring of the performance of sub-entities, and quality assurance to improve efforts. Lastly, the RSVP follows procurement policies and procedures as set for in Federal, State, and County Government and as administered by the Department of Family Services.

Other

Narratives

Not Applicable

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

Not Applicable