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Executive Summary

An estimated 320 unduplicated RSVP volunteers will serve approximately 32,653 hours in 35 workstations by year three. Some of their activities will include delivering Meals on Wheels, supporting local food banks, connecting at risk seniors to health and related care, providing a daily check-in call for older adults who live alone or are isolated, transporting veterans to medical appointments and improving the math skills of area fourth graders by teaching them cribbage. The primary focus area of this project is Healthy Futures with service activities in all three Objectives: Aging in Place, Access to Care and Obesity and Food. By year three of the grant, the program will have achieved the following outputs and outcomes:

1. 450 older adults will be supported to maintain their independence through the Meals on Wheels program. At least 100 recipients will respond to a survey and approximately 90 of them will report increased social ties and perceived social support.
2. 30 older adults will be supported to maintain their independence through a daily telephone reassurance program and 90%, or 27, of them will report increased social ties and perceived social support.
3. 12 older adults or people with disabilities will receive transportation to a therapeutic farm program for respite. Eleven of their caregivers will report increased social ties or perceived social support.
4. 400 area fourth graders at 10 schools will participate in the cribbage program and 82%, or 328, of them will demonstrate improved math skills as evidenced by increased test scores.
5. Families and/or seniors living in substandard housing (approximately 30 individuals) will live in new or repaired homes that are affordable, safe and, when needed, accessible.
6. 200 seniors and 50 veterans will be assisted to access health and related care. (output only)
7. Approximately 14,260 older adults and other members of the community at risk for hunger will receive ongoing and emergency food support. (output only)

The CNCS investment of \$50,246 will be supplemented by \$42,110 (#38337 match and \$3773 excess).

Strengthening Communities

Flathead County encompasses 3,262,720 acres or 5,098 square miles. Approximately 94% of the land mass is National or State Forest Land, Wilderness, Agricultural, and Corporate Timber Land that cannot be developed. The county is home to the western half of Glacier National Park, 2 ski resorts, 8

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golf courses, Flathead Lake, and Hungry Horse Reservoir. Flathead County is the 3rd most populated and one of the fastest growing counties in Montana. According to the U. S. Census Bureau, the population increased from 74,471 in 2000, to 90,928 in 2010. This represents a 22.1% increase over 10 years. Native residents are now greatly outnumbered by new residents, many of whom are retirees and middle aged professionals. There are only 3 incorporated cities in the County: Kalispell with 19,927 residents, Whitefish with 6,357 residents and Columbia Falls, with 4,688 residents. Major industries include health and related services, retail and tourism.

The Primary Focus Area for this grant is Healthy Futures with all but one service activity focused on supporting older adults to age in place and access health and related services. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 24% of Flathead County is age 60 or older (the eligibility age for Older Americans Act Service) and 14.5% are age 65 or older. Among older adults, 34% have a disabling condition, almost 10% live alone and 7% live below the poverty level. Of those seniors receiving in-home assistance services through Area IX/Flathead County Agency on Aging (AOA) more than 80% are assessed at a moderate to high risk of institutionalization based on presenting issues related to physical health (including nutritional needs), mental health, cognitive functioning, ability to complete ADLS or IADLS, mobility, communication, transportation, social connectivity, caregiver support and access to needed services. Last year, AOA served more than 80,000 meals, provided over 8000 hours of direct in-home and community-based services (including respite) and provided more than 500 hours of Medicare and insurance counseling.

The remaining service activity in the Primary Focus Area addresses food distribution and food pantry help. The overall poverty rate in Flathead County is 12.5%, 17.8% for children and almost 42% for single women with children. Those considered food insecure comprise 15.8% of the population, while 23.2% of area children meet the definition. Almost 15% of residents have received assistance from area food banks. For example, in 2012, the Flathead Food Bank served 530,820 meals and gave 24,222 food boxes to almost 4000 families. Approximately 33% of recipients are children and 14% are seniors. According to the Montana Food Bank Network, high poverty rates combined with low population density in many areas make healthy, fresh foods too expensive and/or unavailable from local markets. Almost 7,000 people in Flathead County (7.3% of the population) live in "food deserts," low income areas with limited access to grocery stores. Although food costs have steadily increased since 2007, many eligible people do not participate in public nutrition programs. For example, only

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31% of eligible Flathead County households participate in WIC. Food insecurity and hunger have devastating costs related to economic stability and growth, physical and mental health status across all age groups, academic performance and workforce participation, productivity and earnings. In 2010, Montana's "Hunger Bill" (negative impact of hunger in dollars, not including what is spent on public nutrition programs) was \$590.6 million.

The Healthy Futures Focus Area is comprised of three objectives: Aging in Place, Access to Care and Obesity and Food.

For Aging in Place, RSVP volunteers will support older adults to remain in their homes with a high quality of life and to maintain or gain social connections through the following service activities:

1. Volunteers will make daily telephone calls to check on clients' welfare and provide medication cues. The expectation is that the same volunteer will call the same client whenever possible allowing for the development of a trusted relationship. All volunteers are expected to offer a friendly, caring social contact. (Agency on Aging)
2. Volunteers will deliver daily meals on wheels to clients who cannot prepare their own meals or easily participate in a congregate meal program. Many Meals on Wheels recipients live alone and are socially isolated. Some leave their homes only infrequently. For many, the volunteer delivering the meal is the only person with whom they have regular social contact. Volunteers are trained to be alert for signs that the individual may be unwell or in need of assistance and to call for help if the person does not answer the door. Volunteers ensure that clients receive a nutritious meal, a check on their welfare and a friendly conversation. The result is a reduction in social isolation and a safety net for the county's most vulnerable seniors. (Agency on Aging)
3. Volunteers will provide transportation to older adults age 60+ and people with disabilities to a therapeutic farm program designed to provide social engagement and meaningful activity to individual participants and respite for caregivers. Care Farm participants enjoy typical farm work like gathering eggs, taking care of animals and preparing meals. They have the opportunity to socialize with each other and the farmers, and many benefit from the intergenerational contact. Both farm participants and their caregivers routinely report increased social ties, improved health and well-being, improved outlook on life and decreased behavioral and other challenges. (A Plus Health Care)

For Access to Care, RSVP volunteers will support older adults to learn about and access health and

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related care and will educate them about how to prevent fraud and abuse through the following service activities:

1. Volunteers will provide Medicare and other insurance counseling to those signing up for Medicare for the first time, current enrollees who want to review and/or change plans, individuals who are experiencing problems with their insurance plans and those wanting more information about eligibility and access. (Agency on Aging)
2. Volunteers will be matched with older adults being discharged from the hospital or recovering from illness or injury to provide them with hands-on assistance to access the community services and supports that will enable them to follow their discharge or recovery plan and offer ongoing support to help them stay in their homes as long as possible. (ASSIST)
3. Volunteers will provide fraud and abuse education to area seniors through presentations, trainings/workshops, media spots, one-one-one counseling, distribution of materials, etc. (Agency on Aging)

For Obesity and Food, volunteers will deliver commodities to at risk seniors and assist local food banks to serve all residents at risk of hunger, thereby increasing food security for many of the Valley's most vulnerable citizens. The following service activities will support this objective:

1. Volunteers will deliver commodities to area seniors who are at risk of hunger and resulting health complications such as malnutrition and dehydration that can lead to hospitalization, premature institutionalization and even death. (Flathead Food Bank)
2. Volunteers will help in various capacities at area food banks, including sorting, shelving, packaging and distributing food as well as assisting with eligibility interviews. (Flathead Food Bank, North Valley Food Bank, Columbia Falls Food Bank and the Veterans Food Pantry)

The Area IX Agency on Aging uses three database tracking systems to collect and analyze data on clients served and services provided that will meet the requirements for RSVP reporting. All other workstations track data in various formats. RSVP staff will review the data collection requirements with all workstations to ensure compliance. If any workstations do not currently track data in a way that meets RSVP requirements, then RSVP staff will work with them to develop a system that will.

Veterans comprise more than 10% of the Flathead County population. All of the service activities in Healthy Futures will support veterans. For example, 22% of current Meals on Wheels recipients are

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veterans as are 21% of Agency on Aging respite clients and 26% of telephone reassurance clients. The Veterans Food Pantry is one of the Food Banks that will be served under the Obesity and Food objective. In addition, Medicare counseling, fraud prevention education and ASSIST can be expected to serve veterans at a similar proportion to that of the vet population in the county.

In the Other Focus Areas, services to vets are also anticipated. In the cribbage program (Education, K-12 Success), many vets serve as cribbage coaches and are enjoying the proven benefits of both volunteering and intergenerational interaction. In Housing, 50% of current Mobile Home Repair recipients are veterans and/or their spouses (this percentage fluctuates over time). Serving veterans is a priority area for Habitat for Humanity International, so volunteers with the local branch can expect to serve veterans.

Recruitment and Development

High quality volunteer assignments:

In order to better capture prospective volunteers' skills and interests and to better understand how to match volunteers with opportunities that will offer meaningful experiences, the volunteer enrollment process includes obtaining a completed application, conducting a personal interview and providing an orientation to the RSVP program. Information gathered is entered into the Volunteer Reporter database to maintain and track volunteer information and statistics for placement matching, management and reporting purposes. RSVP staff work closely with volunteer workstations to help them arrange interviews with potential RSVP volunteers to explain their programs and volunteer requirements and to provide facility tours prior to volunteer placement. RSVP staff contact volunteers and workstations on a regular basis which enhances both volunteer and workstation retention rates and satisfaction with RSVP services. Regular contact also supports volunteers to enhance skills and leadership potential, increases volunteers' opportunities for socialization and community involvement and increases the likelihood that volunteers' needs are met and their skills utilized within the program to benefit the populations served.

Volunteers are encouraged to be involved in the planning of new and current RSVP programs and to assist in enhancing the networking capabilities of the organization. The RSVP Advisory Council has committed to creating subcommittees to assist with activities and events, public relations and marketing, finance and recruitment of volunteers and workstations. As an example, a chairman was

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recruited and committee formed to manage the 4th grade Cribbage program, which has been very successful in increasing math skills. In addition, a Chairman was appointed to develop a Fair Planning Committee to coordinate the various activities for seniors at the County Fair, the highlight of which is the RSVP-hosted "Senior Rest Area" where seniors and their families can enjoy refreshments, socialize, purchase discounted rodeo tickets and have a safe place to rest and escape the heat. Information on the RSVP Program, the Agency on Aging and affiliate organizations is also available. This annual effort results in the greatest overall exposure for the RSVP program to the community-at-large.

The RSVP Advisory Council spearheads the strategic planning process for the RSVP program. Additional input from volunteers and community partners with skills and interests related to planning priorities will be collected and utilized.

Training:

RSVP staff gather information on training offered by workstations as part of the workstation development process. The Memorandum of Understanding with each workstation includes expectations for specific or specialized training of volunteers to be placed. In addition, RSVP staff orient volunteers to RSVP requirements and facilitate workstations to interview and orient potential volunteers as part of the matching process to ensure a good fit. RSVP staff also identify community training opportunities and inform and encourage volunteers to take advantage of them by including information in the RSVP newsletter and email "Opportunities" and by personally contacting individual volunteers staff think would benefit based on interests and/or placement.

Recruitment:

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Flathead County remains minimally diverse in terms of race, ethnicity and languages spoken other than English. However, like the rest of Montana, the County is aging rapidly with 24% of the population age 60 or older and 14.5% age 65 or older. In addition, veterans make up 10% of the population. Currently, the age range of the RSVP volunteers is 55 to 96 and the average age is 75, which is in line with the aging nature of the community. Additionally 50 of the current 392 active volunteers are veterans, which exceeds their representation in the overall

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community.

RSVP Program Staff have been successful in attracting volunteers, as well as workstations and donors, that reflect the community as a whole through varied education efforts such as participating in community events and volunteer fairs, arranging press releases and feature articles in local papers, appearing on local radio talk shows, engaging in outreach to public officials, collaborating with the local Senior Centers and participating in a variety of coalitions and work groups to address community issues and needs.

The RSVP recruitment plan further includes continued interaction with all community partners, revamping the RSVP website and Facebook page, using the Volunteer Match website, distribution of the RSVP newsletters and email "Opportunities" (a listing of opportunities to volunteer, donate or participate in social events or community activities) and themed "one page flyers" to promote the RSVP program and funding sources and to recognize volunteers. Updating of the "Volunteers Recruiting Volunteers" recruitment plan will continue. A positive gain of referrals will be made from face-to-face communication at community events and through a "Speaker's Bureau" made up of RSVP volunteers who will provide information about the benefits of volunteering and the RSVP program to clubs and service organizations throughout the Valley.

Recognition:

Volunteers are recognized and rewarded throughout the year. Volunteers and their accomplishments are acknowledged through the bi-monthly newsletter, website, local radio spots and newspaper articles. Activities and events that showcase RSVP volunteers include: The Older Americans Picnic, National Volunteer Week, NW Montana Fair, and a yearly recognition banquet held during Senior Corp week. Informal recognition comes in the form of personal birthday letters, sympathy cards, thank you cards and get well cards. Other recognition comes in the form of birthday announcements in newsletters. RSVP staff also encourage and support workstations to recognize the RSVP volunteers through their programs.

Program Management

Compliance with RSVP Program Requirements:

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Quarterly, RSVP staff will check in with key workstation staff to discuss their experiences and any concerns to date and to assess their ongoing support needs. Annually, RSVP staff will review program requirements, processes and procedures with all current workstations. New workstations will be provided with an in-depth orientation to include a face-to-face meeting with key workstation staff to explain the requirements for a working relationship with RSVP and go over an orientation packet that covers:

1. All pertinent documents- Memorandum of Understanding, workstation responsibilities, listing of rules and regulations (which include but are not limited to preventing or identifying prohibited activities and prohibition of discrimination).
2. Policies and procedures for the Corporations of National Community Service and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program based on the requirements of the RSVP Compliance Monitoring process, the RSVP Operations Handbook and RSVP regulations and other CNSCE support documents.
3. Examples of workstation policies and procedures relative to volunteer placements that should be shared with RSVP staff, such as confidentiality agreements, background check requirements, operating policies and procedures, etc.
4. Data collection and reporting requirements

At the annual visit, RSVP staff will review all current CNCS compliance requirements and provide information to assist workstations in understanding the need for safety training, keeping accurate records, and other volunteer management related topics.

Volunteer Performance of Assigned Service:

Placement: Face to face interview with new volunteers to assure placements are appropriate for both the volunteers (interest, skills and abilities) and the workstations. Assure that workstations are in alignment with CNCS grant requirements and that volunteers understand their roles.

Onsite workstation visit for volunteers: The workstation Volunteer Coordinator will arrange onsite visits for volunteers to tour facilities and participate in an orientation to the organization's mission, volunteer requirements, training, safety requirements, policies and procedures, etc. Volunteers will also be provided with promotional literature to help them better understand how the workstation engages in community outreach and collaboration.

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Quarterly check-in with workstations to ensure volunteers' performance is meeting station expectations: If a volunteer is not performing to workstation standards, RSVP staff will assist the workstation Volunteer Coordinator to develop a plan of action to bring the volunteer up to speed or, if necessary, to offer the volunteer a new placement.

Quarterly check in with volunteers to discuss their experiences and assess their continued interest in the placement and ability to perform the assigned services.

Community Needs Assessment and Graduation of Workstations:

RSVP staff and the RSVP Advisory Council, which is made up of representatives of the Flathead County community, engage in a community needs assessment process annually. RSVP staff also participate in area coalitions and workgroups that are formed to address both broad and specific community needs such as food insecurity, homeless youth, non-profit leadership development and veterans services (e.g. Joining Community Forces). The RSVP Program also participates in the Montana Governor's Winter Ready Program and the Fire Ready Program.

Additionally, program staff engage in an on-going assessment of community needs and adjust program priorities and efforts accordingly. The overwhelming majority of current volunteers and workstations stations fit the new grant requirements. There should be little or no disruption in placements or need to graduate stations.

Measuring performance in the Primary Focus Areas:

The Primary Focus Area for the program is Health Futures with an emphasis on activities that serve older adults. RSVP is part of the Area IX Agency on Aging (AOA) serving Flathead County. AOA provides multiple services that are designed to help older adults age 60 and over to successfully age in place in their homes and communities: Meals on Wheels (county-wide), congregate meals at seven area sites, information and assistance, in-home care, respite, community support, transportation, Medicare/Medicaid and other insurance counseling, ombudsman services and support to area senior centers. In FY 2014, AOA served over 80,000 meals and provided more than 8000 hours of direct in-

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home and community-based services. The agency conducts annual client surveys to assess client satisfaction and perceptions of the value of services provided in meeting client needs and supporting desired outcomes. The 2014 survey is currently underway and includes individual interviews with randomly selected respondents. In addition, the AOA maintains an internal client database that tracks a variety of related performance measures, including the degree to which services are targeted to individuals at the highest risk of institutionalization. The AOA depends heavily on RSVP volunteers to implement programs and provide high quality services. For example, RSVP currently supports the agency's nutrition program with 110 Meals on Wheels drivers and 20 congregate site volunteers. In addition, one RSVP SHIP-certified volunteer provides Medicare and related counseling to 20% of all clients served through the program. RSVP volunteers give almost \$200,000 annually in valued service to AOA programs and clients. AOA could not provide its current level of services without RSVP volunteers. Other area entities that serve older adults, such as food banks, also benefit greatly from using RSVP volunteers.

Compliance with Federal Regulations:

The Flathead County RSVP program has been serving the Valley since 1973. It has a well established RSVP Advisory Council and a comprehensive management plan for volunteer placement and compliance with Federal regulations, including MOU requirements and volunteer eligibility. The program is evaluated by the RSVP Advisory Council and the Flathead County Commissioners on a regular basis through reporting procedures.

Organizational Capability

The Flathead County RSVP Program, established in 1973, celebrated its 40th anniversary last year. The program began with 10 volunteers and three sites and has grown to support 392 active volunteers serving in 69 work stations. The program currently provides support to organizations serving at-risk adults age 60 and older, school-aged children and youth, individuals and families with low incomes or other challenging circumstances, and other community efforts. RSVP is part of the Area IX Agency on Aging (AOA), which is a Flathead County Department. The AOA operates according to County administrative, financial, personnel and operating policies and procedures, and all AOA/RSVP staff are County employees. The County is the primary source of local matching funds, cash and in-kind. The RSVP program also receives community support and funding from United Way as well as a modest amount of private donations.

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The full-time RSVP Director, Sue Holst, works under the supervision of the AOA Director, Lisa Sheppard. Sue is responsible for programmatic compliance and oversight, grant development, output/outcome tracking and reporting, outreach and collaboration with community organizations, as well as managing day-to-day operations and workstation development. She supervises a half-time Volunteer Coordinator, Leslie Potter, who recruits and places volunteers, maintains volunteer files and develops and distributes a quarterly newsletter as well as other outreach materials. (Note: The RSVP Director also currently supervises a full-time Project Coordinator for an RSVP pilot program that is now underway. However, there are insufficient federal funds available through this application to continue to support the position beyond March 2015.) Sue also facilitates operation of the RSVP Advisory Council. Members meet monthly to offer input on program vision and direction and to provide hands-on assistance on a variety of projects to enhance program effectiveness and recognize volunteers for their positive impact on the community. The Council consists of up to 12 community members appointed to staggered terms by the Flathead County Commissioners.

The AOA Director provides overall program oversight as well as fiscal oversight with the assistance of AOA administrative staff and the County Finance Department. The Finance Department oversees the annual county budget development process, compliance with audit requirements, and development of finance related policies such as purchasing and travel. Additional support for program and asset management is provided through the County structure, which includes the County Administrator, Human Resources, Information Technology, County Attorney, Records and Maintenance departments.

Flathead County as a whole manages more than 50 federal, state and local grants across multiple departments responsible for implementing a wide variety of services, including transportation, public health, aging and other human services, parks and recreation, and education. The current RSVP Director has 21 years of experience in program development and volunteer management, the last three with the Flathead County RSVP Program. The AOA Director has Masters Degrees in Social Work and Public Administration as well as more than 20 years of experience in human services organizations, including 12 years in organizational management and implementation and oversight of multiple federal, state and local grants.

Other

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N/A

PNS Amendment (if applicable)

N/A