

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

As the a current RSVP sponsor for Allegheny County, Pittsburgh Cares seeks funds in the amount of \$57,570.00 from the Corporation for National and Community Service in support of the continuation and expansion of a robust RSVP project in the adjacent, Beaver County, Pennsylvania. The CNCS federal investment will be supplemented by \$17,572.00 in matching, non-federal resources. An estimated stretch goal of 75 RSVP volunteers will serve. Of this number, 58 RSVP volunteers will be placed in outcome based assignments. The mission of Pittsburgh Cares is to maximize the impact of our regional nonprofit partners by mobilizing volunteers and engaging the community. As the primary volunteer agency in Allegheny County, we serve more than 12,000 volunteers per year. In Beaver County, we are currently partnered with most of the major volunteering/service entities, such as, Meals on Wheels, Catholic Charities, The Salvation Army, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Habitat for Humanity. As a leader in volunteer engagement, Pittsburgh Cares connects all sectors in the southwestern PA region -- individuals, businesses, non-profit organizations, schools, and governments -- to meet the most critical community need through volunteerism and capacity building. RSVP Beaver County, as sponsored by Pittsburgh Cares, will place a minimum of 46 seniors in more than 20 nonprofit organizations for community service. Some of their activities will include, serving meals to homebound senior citizens as well as making social visits to the same. While the primary focus area will be Healthy Futures, RSVP volunteers will also serve by assisting with neighborhood revitalization projects, as well as supporting programs that connect rural veterans and families of veterans with services and support. As an affiliate of the Points of Light Institute, we have been asked to consider hosting two "Frontline Military Family" AmeriCorps members. It is anticipated that these individuals will provide significant support in connecting RSVP volunteers with veteran-serving organizations.

Additionally volunteers will support agencies serving the most economically disadvantaged residents of Beaver County by serving at agencies that combat food security and economic instability. Lastly, through Pittsburgh Cares vast network of over 400 non-profit partners, RSVP volunteers will have the opportunity to select service sites that simultaneously support the identified focus area (Healthy Futures), while also meeting the individual needs of the volunteer. At Pittsburgh Cares we pride ourselves in customizing the volunteer experience for each individual, taking into account scheduling, geographic and specific agency preferences and requests.

## Strengthening Communities

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Beaver County is located in southwest Pennsylvania northwest of the city of Pittsburgh and is considered to be part of the greater Pittsburgh, metropolitan area. The County is bordered on the west by the States of Ohio and the panhandle of West Virginia; the south by Washington County; the east by Allegheny and Butler counties; and the north by Lawrence County. The predominate feature of the County is the Ohio River which enters from the southeast and flows to the center of the county before turning southwest and exiting the state to form the boundary between Ohio and West Virginia.

Beaver County is comprised of two incorporated, third class cities (Aliquippa and Beaver Falls), and 52 boroughs and townships.

According to data recently released by the Census' American Community Survey, nearly 20,700 Beaver County residents, or 12.4 percent, live below the poverty line, including 6,700 children. That total number represents a 33 percent increase from 2007, when the county's poverty rate was 9.1 percent. In addition to those county residents under the age of 18 living in poverty, Census data illustrates that 14 percent are women and 30 percent are black, compared to 10.6 percent of whites. According to 2013 estimates, women make up about 51 percent of the county's population, while blacks account for just 6 percent. Additionally, in the 12th Congressional District -- which includes Beaver County, southern Lawrence County, the North Hills, and parts of Westmoreland, Cambria and Somerset counties -- the poverty rate for blacks is more than 31 percent, almost 4 percent higher the national average. Morton Coleman, the director emeritus of the Institute of Politics of the University of Pittsburgh and a professor emeritus at Pitt's School of Social Work, said Beaver County communities, many of which are struggling economically, are hampered when it comes to addressing poverty issues because they simply lack the resources. Fortunately, Programs such as the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program exist to address issues of poverty, aging in place, food security and veterans issues. By placing RSVP volunteers within opportunities that produce measurable results, we will be able to effectively convey the accomplishments of the program, not only to the community at large, but to the volunteers themselves, thereby reinforcing the model of evidence based volunteerism.

### **Recruitment and Development**

Currently, midway through year one of the recompleted RSVP of Allegheny county grant, Pittsburgh Cares has successfully recruited and placed over 100 volunteers at volunteer stations that contribute to the goals and impact areas as established by the original grant, thereby demonstrating the strong ability of Pittsburgh Cares to engage and recruit from the community at large. As Pittsburgh Cares extends its sphere of influence towards Beaver County by supporting RSVP, additional partner agencies will be worked into the pre-existing network of service.

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In addition to the website ([www.pittsburghcares.org](http://www.pittsburghcares.org)) that is readily searchable and available to the public, Pittsburgh Cares has also created a dedicated website that parallels the main site (<http://rsvp.pittsburghcares.org/>) specifically designed and oriented for those interested in learning about, and signing up for RSVP. New volunteer opportunities are routinely updated and existing volunteer opportunities that need support are often featured. Furthermore, Pittsburgh Cares understands that RSVP is not only effective as an important volunteer engagement tool for the community, but also a strong social network for those who participate in the program. Users can utilize the website to learn more about upcoming recognition events, social networking and training events, in addition to finding the perfect volunteer placement.

RSVP of Beaver County will follow the lead of RSVP Allegheny county and understand that the changing dynamic of how the sub demographics within the age set of 55 years or older have affected the traditional way that older volunteers have been recruited and engaged. It has been recognized nationally by CNCS, as well as many other institutions, that the "Boomer" generation engages in volunteering opportunities in a way that is considerably different than previous generations. RSVP of Allegheny County has, and continues to achieve high levels of success in recruiting new volunteers from this demographic, and RSVP of Beaver county will benefit from the same. Currently Over 50% of the placed volunteers fall within the age range of 55-62 years old. RSVP of Allegheny County has learned through observation and practice that the "Boomer" generation appreciates the utilization of technology that Pittsburgh Cares employs to have a "hands on" approach to customizing their volunteer experience. Most volunteers are using this access to information to volunteer at multiple service sites.

It is of utmost priority to Pittsburgh Cares RSVP's to recruit a diverse pool of volunteers that will reflect the fabric of a diverse region. Currently, our pool of volunteers is split by gender, 40% male and 60% female. Pittsburgh Cares and RSVP has worked very hard to reach out and recruit from communities that would more accurately reflect the diversity of Western PA. This includes targeting recruitment drives in neighborhoods and towns that do not follow the general ethnic and racial trends of the greater Pittsburgh region. So far, events have been held in the predominantly African-American communities of East Liberty, The Hill District, Wilkinsburg and Braddock. Additionally, these events are often held at the facilities that partnering agencies maintain in these neighborhoods, thereby bringing the volunteer, and service site into a circle of reciprocity that enables a more holistic community. In Beaver County, an effort will be made to access, not only the urban centers of poverty, but the rural regions as well.

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About 4% of current volunteers have self-reported a disability that would affect their ability to volunteer, however, we have added language to our Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) that explicitly asks partnering agencies to not discriminate on the basis of a disability, and have found placement for 100% of those who self-reported. Also, we have added language to our M.O.U that expressly prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation as well.

With an active base of nearly 12,000 unique volunteers, Pittsburgh Cares is a leading regional expert in volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition. We would build our Beaver County RSVP volunteer corps by directly reaching out to retirees and seniors within our existing base and inviting them to RSVP kickoffs and open houses throughout Beaver County. We have always recognized the value of senior volunteers, and we would continue to recruit additional RSVP volunteers by working directly with our existing and vast network of corporate partners to access retiree groups. Pittsburgh Cares currently enjoys the benefit of an active and dynamic Board of Directors that represent both public and private entities. They have made it their goal and priority to arrange partnerships between the corporate retirement groups that their companies and or unions are affiliated with and RSVP. This will grant RSVP access to some of the greatest pools of skilled based volunteers in the region.

Additionally, we will focus ongoing recruitment efforts on rotary clubs, senior volunteer fairs, and community events. We also recognize the recent studies around veteran's interests in volunteering and the associated benefits, therefore, Beaver County RSVP will develop a plan to recruit veteran volunteers. Pittsburgh Cares is currently a strong contender to be the sponsor for two Americorps positions that will focus on recruiting veterans and their family members as volunteer leaders. These Americorps positions will be instructed to devote a portion of their time to advancing the goals of veteran support and volunteerism of both Beaver and Allegheny County. Beaver County RSVP will use this network along with established relationship with the VA Hospital system, the VFW, and other area nonprofits that serve veterans to assist with recruitment. We also have the opportunity to promote RSVP to hundreds of volunteers at our service projects each month. Further, our strong relationships with local radio stations and media outlets enable us to promote and build excitement around RSVP throughout the region. We have, and will continue to secure televised interviews on KDKA TV and Comcast Newsmakers, as well as print interviews with the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and Tribune Review. Pittsburgh Cares has always been an early adapter of the power of digital marketing and recruitment. In addition to our powerful website platform, every week, Pittsburgh Cares releases a digital newsletter called eCares. It highlights the work of volunteers in Allegheny and Beaver County and has a distribution base of 25,000. We feature a section on RSVP in every weekly edition. This

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serves to not only communicate with our base of age eligible volunteers, but also reaches the community at large who can then serve to pass this info on to members of the community who may not typically be receiving this content. We also maintain a very active presence on social media (Facebook, twitter, Instagram) to highlight our efforts and allow our volunteers to stay interconnected and provide feedback.

Having managed volunteers and refined our processes for 20 years, Pittsburgh Cares understands that the key to volunteer retention is always providing volunteers with high quality service experiences. Individuals want to be sure their time is being utilized in the most worthwhile manner and truly making a positive impact on their community. Upon enrollment, all RSVP volunteers receive one-on-one orientation meetings with RSVP staff member prior to placement, and confirmation that site-specific agency training is provided prior to beginning the actual volunteer work. Follow ups made by the RSVP Director and Program Manager on the successful placement of a volunteer is an integral aspect of making sure that volunteer satisfaction has been attained. This is an important aspect of volunteer retention. Additionally, all volunteers are notified that the offices of Pittsburgh Cares, as well as the lines of communication to the Director are freely open for inquiries as well as the ability to express dissatisfaction with their placement. As our primary focus area will be education, Pittsburgh Cares plans to utilize our existing expertise, by adding bi-monthly in-service trainings, to be offered at Pittsburgh Cares by our youth development staff and by educational and agency partners.

Recognition is also directly linked to retention; volunteer service cannot be taken for granted. Pittsburgh Cares and its nonprofit partners would host regularly scheduled volunteer recognition events, highlighting RSVP volunteers that have logged the most service hours and demonstrating the impact of the program at large. We also incorporate RSVP into our existing volunteer recognition efforts. For example, we currently partner with the Pittsburgh Pirates and offer volunteers that log service hours a complimentary baseball ticket; the volunteer that completes the most service hours during the regular baseball season is recognized on the field during a home game. We plan to acknowledge the "all-star" RSVP volunteers at these ceremonies in the future.

### **Program Management**

All nonprofit partners are screened and approved by the Director of Community Programs as well as by the RSVP Director. Nonprofits must be established 501(c)3 organizations and prohibit discrimination in their volunteer, service and hiring practices. Site visits and volunteer needs assessments are conducted before non profit partners are matched with volunteers, ensuring that agencies have the capacity and facilities for providing volunteers a safe, high quality service

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experience.

Volunteer opportunities are also screened and approved by the Director of Community Programs, as well as the RSVP Director, ensuring that volunteers are utilizing their skills in order to positively impact the community. Approved volunteer requests must demonstrate how a project will be a worthwhile volunteer experience, how the volunteer efforts are meeting a pressing community need as well as the impact areas as defined by CNCS, and the population(s) being served. Requests to use volunteers for partisan political efforts or to proselytize are not approved. We also request that volunteers submit feedback in their online volunteer account after each project, which is viewable by both Pittsburgh Cares and the managing nonprofit partner. Our top priority is to provide each volunteer with a meaningful service experience.

Additionally, when RSVP of Allegheny County was established in October of 2012, it understood and accepted the transition to performance measure and output/outcome modality that Senior Corps was experiencing holistically. Even though at the time RSVP of Allegheny County was under no mandate to adhere to all of the new performance measures that parallel programs were graduating to, we adopted these measures early on and have included language directed at our partners within the body of our M.O.U., to ensure compliance in the tracking and reporting of performance measure objectives. Furthermore, the RSVP Director and Program manager make routine quarterly visits to approved service sites to train new staff, and monitor for compliance. This process is overseen by the Executive Director of Pittsburgh Cares.

RSVP of Allegheny County also convenes a quarterly Advisory Council composed of RSVP volunteers, Service site staff, and interested parties representing the community at large. Many vital program policies have been directly created and vetted through this Advisory Council.

Pittsburgh Cares is constantly working to meet changing community needs. We survey our nonprofit partners twice a year to gain their feedback about emerging community needs that are faced by our partners and the community. Likewise, our board of directors includes representatives from city government and the human service sector. They assist in ensuring that we are aware of and prepared to address emerging needs.

As Pittsburgh Cares proposes to expand our coverage of services into Beaver County by sponsoring RSVP, the same program management principles that are currently being applied to RSVP Allegheny County will be adhered to.

### **Organizational Capability**

Pittsburgh Cares will hire a qualified Beaver County RSVP project manager to work 20 hours per

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week. The project manager, with the support of the Program Director, recruits, trains, places, supports and recognizes senior volunteers. The director also recruits, trains and supports excellent volunteer opportunities for diverse seniors. The RSVP project director researches and assesses the volunteer needs of the community -- and assesses the impact of volunteers in addressing community needs prior to placing volunteers at a particular station. A plan for program management quality has been developed, and with the help of the Executive Director, outlines program goals and objectives that indicate the efforts of RSVP volunteers and how they impact critical community needs. Regularly assessing project performance, project accomplishments and impact on the community assures all Beaver County RSVP goals and objectives are met. The Beaver County RSVP project manager will work closely with the assigned staff members at the volunteer stations who are responsible for the placement of RSVP volunteers within their station. Training, frequent communication and data sharing help build the relationship between the RSVP project manager, the volunteer stations and also ensure accountability when it comes to managing information and data that will demonstrate the actual impacts of the project and its volunteers. In the event an RSVP volunteer requests an in-home assignment, a Letter of Agreement will need to be signed and it will be the responsibility of the RSVP project director to ensure that the placement complies with all regulations and requirements just as the other volunteer stations. The RSVP project manager has initially served as the station supervisor for any in-home assignments. As with all Pittsburgh Cares programming, reasonable accommodations for RSVP volunteers with disabilities are made in adherence to all federal, state and local law. The RSVP project director provides support and information to RSVP volunteers on a regular/weekly basis. It is the imperative for the director to maintain a relationship with all RSVP volunteers through social visits, phone calls, emails, and bi-monthly newsletters that highlight stories and accomplishments from the field. It is important to note that once a volunteer has been assigned to a particular station, the RSVP project director will provide a walk through orientation to the station and if necessary, arrange for appropriate in-service training to ensure success and confidence when performing duties. RSVP volunteers meet their work station supervisor and are trained on any workstation policies/procedures, including safety policies and procedures prior to starting their actual assignments. The RSVP project manager will adhere to the same thorough financial management processes and procedures as Pittsburgh Cares, the sponsor organization. The RSVP project manager will maintain the appropriate fiscal and program records and review the financial statements and program budget on a weekly basis, prior to providing records to the sponsor organization for review. The RSVP project manager manages all project resources, both financial and in-kind, to ensure

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accountability and efficient use of these resources and will keep detailed records and acknowledgment reports. Working closely with the Pittsburgh Cares Executive, the RSVP project manager will assist in the identification of funding prospects for the Beaver RSVP project and with grant making. All RSVP project budgets, financial and development reports, and data will be tracked using Pittsburgh Cares data management systems, such as Quick Books and advanced Salesforce Technology and are reviewed and approved by the Executive Director, as well as by the Board and Treasurer.

Pittsburgh Cares employs five full-time staff members.. A board of directors consisting of 18 members governs Pittsburgh Cares and makes up five advisory committees: communications, development, executive, governance, and human resources. Pittsburgh Cares continues to be in a strong financial position. For six consecutive years, audited financial reports will confirm a positive balance and an increase in planned revenue. The annual audit confirms for constituents, board members, and other stakeholders that financial management systems are sound. All program budgets are reviewed by the executive director on a monthly basis and by the board treasurer on a bi-monthly basis. Pittsburgh Cares is experienced in managing federal grant funds through the CNCS and is familiar with most recent reporting processes. As Pittsburgh Cares' senior executive, Deb Hopkins is responsible for leading the nonprofit organization's efforts to meet Pittsburgh's critical needs through volunteer service. Hopkins has a strong background in nonprofit management and administration of volunteer programs, with more than twenty years of executive level experience leading organizations such as Junior Achievement of Central Massachusetts, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), Girls Inc. and the United Way of Central Massachusetts. Allegheny County RSVP Director, Riley Baker holds a B.A. in Sociology from SUNY Fredonia. Prior to accepting a position with Pittsburgh Cares, he developed and managed volunteer programs for the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership. In 2011 He won the Golden Triangle Presidents Award, for his success in volunteer management and program development. Since accepting the position at Pittsburgh Cares, he has managed to attract a significantly high number of "baby boomers" to RSVP. Allegheny County RSVP Director has been hired, trained, and evaluated by the Director of Community Programs. Additionally, we will now seek a project manager with a bachelor's degree and experience in operating social service program, working with senior citizens, volunteers, community partners, and committees. Pittsburgh Cares will also take close consideration of an applicant's familiarity with Beaver County as well as give priority to applicants of whom are currently working in the nonprofit sector of Beaver County. The project manager will dedicate 100% of his/her time to supporting RSVP program initiatives. A human resources committee provides specific tools and guidance to the executive director and senior staff for

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communicating expectations, setting goals, evaluating employee performance, recognizing accomplishments, and communicating developmental needs. Pittsburgh Cares employees are required to have an annual written performance assessment, which includes a self-assessment and an individual performance plan that aligns with each staff member's work plan. Pittsburgh Cares has a strong track record of successfully managing volunteer programs and impact-based community programming. Examples include providing EVP support to approximately 100 local corporations, including Highmark, Dicks Sporting Goods, Citizens Bank, and Alcoa; served as the city's lead organizer for MLK Day, Global Youth Service Day, and Make a Difference Day, 9/11 Day of Service and partner with the US Marine Corps on the local Toys for Tots campaign, an initiative that directly impacts over 100 nonprofit organizations and close to 3,000 families each year. Pittsburgh Cares is experienced in working with seniors through our Community Connections volunteer programming. The interest in and knowledge of the capability of older adults positions Pittsburgh Cares to be a successful sponsor organization of the Beaver County RSVP. Nearly all of our 600+ nonprofit partners utilize senior volunteers. More than 1,200 individuals within our active volunteer base are over the age of 55. Pittsburgh Cares has proven its ability to develop strong community financial and programmatic support. It is evident through our accomplishments and strong reputation that we are a trusted community partner. Our diverse funding sources, specifically the local foundation community, corporate community, and education community along with our fee-for-service program partnerships with numerous organizations are indicative of the value placed on our work by the community. As the sponsor organization of Allegheny County RSVP, Pittsburgh Cares will assume full responsibility for securing maximum and continuing community financial and in-kind support to operate the project successfully.

### Other

The proposed budget does not include Personnel Fringe Benefit costs for the 3 staff positions. Please clarify how these line items will be covered or adjust the budget to reflect the costs.

The Beaver County position would be a part time role, therefore personnel fringe benefits would be negligible. All other positions billed to this grant have fringe benefits allocated to other funding sources, negating the need to bill within the CNCS Beaver County grant.

Please include budget justification information for the following line items to be able to

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determine if costs are allowable and consistent with program usage: rent, directors and officers insurance, and mobile office hardware.

Per our auditor and board finance committee, these items are all determined by the percentage that each Pittsburgh Cares program represents of our total budget (for example, a program representing 8537% of our total budget would be billed 8537% of these costs.

Allocated costs appear high for mobile office hardware and equipment. Is this equipment for a home office?

Yes, these expenses would cover the costs of either equipping an individual with a home office, as our primary offices are located in downtown Pittsburgh.

Is the Bookkeeper listed in Contractual and Consultant Services a contract position? If not this position should be included in the personnel section. Please clarify.

Yes, our Bookkeeper is a contractual position.

How is 1/6 of General Administrative cost calculated? Please clarify.

As indicated in the response to a previous question, each program is billed for these expenses based upon the total percentage of our overall budget that the program represents.

In the Budget Narrative-Source of Funds section, please provide a list of your Section I and Section II non-federal funding sources.

Unrestricted agency revenue in the form of individual donations, special events, and grants allocated to support general operations represent the non-federal funding sources listed in section I and section II non-federal funding sources.

### **PNS Amendment (if applicable)**

N/A