Government Efficiency Committee Evaluation of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

FACTS:

RSVP Program

A. **Summary of Organization**: Black Hills RSVP is a volunteer program that supplies volunteers to non-profit and service organizations in our community and other communities in the Black Hills area in accordance with a Federal Grant received from the Corporation for National and Community Services.

B. **Agreement/Contract with City of Rapid City** - Black Hills RSVP is a department of the City of Rapid City.

C. **2017 Budget/Funding of Organization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Grant</td>
<td>$48,301.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pennington County Council on Aging</td>
<td>$1,600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Rapid City (in-kind contributions - rent/accounting/etc)</td>
<td>$11,046.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Rapid City Investment Funds 2016</td>
<td>$4,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Various Foundation Funding</td>
<td>$4,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising/Donations</td>
<td>$18,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Budget without additional City of Rapid City support</strong></td>
<td><strong>$86,947.00</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Rapid City REQUESTED support</td>
<td>$30,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2017 RSVP Proposed Budget</strong></td>
<td><strong>$116,947.00</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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D. **Organization Partnerships**

RSVP works with approximately 100 non-profit and service organizations in the Rapid City and the Black Hills area.

RSVP works with approximately 600 plus volunteers. They recruit an average of 75 new volunteers each year.

E. **RSVP Alignment with the Comprehensive Plan**

The RSVP program fits well within certain areas of the City of Rapid City’s Comprehensive Plan Core Values.

- The Principle of Safe, Healthy, Inclusive and Skilled Community (SHIS)
  - Goal SHIS 3.1 – expand opportunities for fitness and active living – through volunteerism at RSVP, residents are able to maintain a more active lifestyle.
• Goal SHIS 3.2 – enhance options for food that is healthy, affordable, and convenient - RSVP connects volunteers to Meals on Wheels in order to assist those unable to access healthy, nutritional meals otherwise.
• Goal SHIS 3.3 – increase the accessibility of health and social services – RSVP volunteers help ensure those who couldn’t otherwise reach medical appointments have a ride.
• Goal SHIS 5.1 – support a citywide network of strong and successful schools – RSVP volunteers work with students below grade-level reading to bring their reading skills up to or above grade level.
• The Principle of Outstanding Recreational & Cultural Opportunities
  • Goal 2.1 – provide a variety of community and recreational facilities and offerings – RSVP volunteers are actively involved in many age-specific opportunities at the nursing homes and assisted living facilities.
• The Principle of Responsive, Accessible & Effective Governance
  • Goal 2.1 – encourage civic engagement – everything about RSVP is encouraging others to become involved in their community.

F. RSVP Benefit to the Community (tangible and intangible)

   TANGIBLE:
   • Approximately 155,000 hours of volunteer service contributed to Rapid City and Black Hills area non-profit community with an estimated economic impact of $1,250,000.
   • 244 children with “below basic” reading abilities were tutored by RSVP Volunteers in Rapid City Schools and 239 of those children improved their reading skills to above basic during the last academic school year.
   • 91 seniors were regularly provided transportation for doctor appointments, grocery stores and essential errands.

   INTANGIBLE:
   • Volunteer statements: 1) Allows participants to remain connected with the people and organizations they love …and makes it easier for anyone of any age to give back; 2) Angie’s person-to-person relationship is important to the elderly; 3) we feel needed again in our lives; 4) Makes me feel worthwhile; 5) Big inspiration to do the volunteer work I do; and 5) It give me a sense of pride to give to the community through RSVP.

G. Duplication of Service
• Other Volunteer coordination organizations, beyond RSVP, exist within the Rapid City area:
• Most of the 100 plus non-profit and service organizations have an internal volunteer coordinator.
• Volunteer Connections is the helpline center managed through the 211 program. Volunteer Connections has been operating in the Black Hills since 2015. Volunteers can either check for volunteer opportunities through their website, received weekly opportunity emails/text messages, or call 211 and work with the Volunteer Contact. Most of the non-profit and service organizations working with RSVP also are registered with 211 to find volunteers.
• Volunteers of America – Dakotas’ Rapid City office basically manages their program: 1) Mommy’s Closet; 2) Ryan White Care Act; 3) Young Women’s Success Project; and 4) Youth and Family Intervention Project.

H. Areas where RSVP does NOT align with the Comprehensive Plan Core Values:
  • The Principle of Responsive, Accessible & Effective Governance
    o Goal GOV1.3 – Collaborate on means to explore efficiencies and promote cooperation. Volunteer coordination services are provided by many entities, as already described. RSVP has not been working with those other entities to gain efficiencies.
    o Goal GOV4.3 – evaluate opportunities to improve administrative efficiency. As already described, many other entities provide volunteer coordination services. Those other entities are utilizing what appear to be more efficient ways to recruit and match volunteers (email, website, 211 call-in number). RSVP is not actively recruiting volunteers or matching activities through those avenues.

Recommendation:

Black Hills Area non-profits, service organizations and governmental entities (county fair, civic center, schools, etc.) rely heavily on volunteers in order to provide services to the community. Volunteerism is also an opportunity for citizens of all ages to give back to their community. In this process of giving back it enables them to feel worthwhile, socialize, and see their community from a different perspective.

RSVP does assist in coordinating the need for volunteers in the Black Hills Area – however there are multiple other entities providing the same service.

In addition to the areas where RSVP aligns very closely with the Comprehensive Plan Core Values, there are other areas in which it does NOT align.

Based on the information provided, we recommend the City of Rapid City not fund RSVP for another $30,000 in 2018. Moving forward, regardless of whether RSVP chooses to submit the last continuation application for the current federal grant, or not, we would not recommend additional funding beyond the investment funds and in-kind contributions.
We recommend that RSVP coordinate closely with the 211 Volunteer Connections Program to find ways to work together.

We appreciate all that RSVP does, and has done, for the Black Hills area in the last 30 plus years and realize change can be both challenging and rewarding.