

**Corporation for National and Community Service
2011 Social Innovation Fund
Mile High United Way**

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**2011 Social Innovation Fund
Mile High United Way
Section 1 – Application**

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PART I - FACE SHEET

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction															
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to confirm to the Corporation's eGrants System)																	
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS): 04/12/11		3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:															
2b. APPLICATION ID: 11SI127773		4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY: 04/12/11															
		STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:															
		FEDERAL IDENTIFIER: 11SIHCO01															
5. APPLICATION INFORMATION																	
LEGAL NAME: Mile High United Way DUNS NUMBER: 064071343		NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Lindsay Morgan Tracy TELEPHONE NUMBER: (303) 561-2335 FAX NUMBER: INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: lindsay.morgantracy@unitedwaydenver.org															
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 2505 18th Street Denver CO 80211 - 3907 County: Denver																	
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 840404235		7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit 7b. Community-Based Organization Local Affiliate of National Organization															
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> A. AUGMENTATION B. BUDGET REVISION C. NO COST EXTENSION D. OTHER (specify below):		9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: Corporation for National and Community Service															
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER:94.019 10b. TITLE: Social Innovation Fund		11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Mile High United Way Early Literacy Social Innovation Fund															
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): State of Colorado		11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY): SIF - Issue Area Youth															
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 09/30/11 END DATE: 09/30/15		14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="CO 001"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="CO 001"/>															
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: <input type="text" value="1"/>		16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS? <input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON: DATE: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372															
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">a. FEDERAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 3,629,412.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. APPLICANT</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 3,631,628.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. STATE</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d. LOCAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e. OTHER</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>f. PROGRAM INCOME</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g. TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 7,261,040.00</td> </tr> </table>		a. FEDERAL	\$ 3,629,412.00	b. APPLICANT	\$ 3,631,628.00	c. STATE	\$ 0.00	d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00	e. OTHER	\$ 0.00	f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00	g. TOTAL	\$ 7,261,040.00	17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
a. FEDERAL	\$ 3,629,412.00																
b. APPLICANT	\$ 3,631,628.00																
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d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00																
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00																
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00																
g. TOTAL	\$ 7,261,040.00																
18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.																	
a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: Monique Orthober		b. TITLE: Foundations & Grants	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (303) 561-2329														
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:		e. DATE SIGNED: 07/21/11															

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Executive Summary

Mile High United Way (MHUW) is an EXISTING GRANTMAKING INSTITUTION. The MHUW Early Literacy Social Innovation Fund (Early Literacy SIF) is an ISSUE-BASED SIF focusing on YOUTH DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF COLORADO to increase the number of third graders reading at proficiency in Colorado's 47 rural counties and 17 urban counties.

Key measurable outcomes include: a 25 percent increase in third grade reading proficiency levels by 2016, based on standardized testing in Colorado; a robust statewide coordination of the early literacy agenda; the comprehensive development of a communications plan to inform the general public about the plan to increase early grade level reading proficiencies; ongoing data measurements; consistent collaboration with early learning councils across the state to engage volunteers in this important effort; and a comprehensive database of 3,000 volunteers directly impacting this initiative.

The Early Literacy SIF requests the support of the Corporation for National and Community Service with \$1,814,706 each year for the next five years. MHUW will provide a 1:1 cash match based off of Federal Funds received with subgrantees also providing the same dollar-for-dollar cash match for every dollar received. At the time of this application, MHUW has secured 50 percent of the cash match requirement through individuals, corporations and foundation support as reflected in unrestricted cash on hand.

Research shows that we can predict which students will drop out, with a high degree of reliability, years before they even reach high school. Poor reading ability in the early grades is clearly linked to high school dropouts (Jerald 2006).

With strong bipartisan political will led by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and the state legislature, Colorado is poised to deliver on the strong movement for reform by emphasizing coordination and communication among the stakeholder groups for whom the educational status quo is no longer an option.

Over the next five years, the Early Literacy SIF will showcase a systematic change in Colorado early

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literacy initiatives. MHUW will coordinate early childhood education programs and service providers around a shared vision of early literacy proficiency and a standardized set of outcomes, mobilize volunteers in organizations using evidence-based programs to improve early literacy proficiency rates, and demonstrate an increase of 25 percent in third grade reading proficiency levels with increasing levels of evidence.

The Early Literacy SIF will conduct an open, competitive process that will be completed within a six-month time frame to attract a diverse pool of entities implementing programs showing at least preliminary levels of evidence in increasing early grade literacy rates.

All selected subgrantees will work closely with MHUW in collaboration with a research organization to undertake rigorous evaluations to improve the strength of their evidence.

MHUW has a history of applying evidence produced by rigorous evaluations to decision-making and to improving specific programs within this issue area, such as Making Connections-Denver funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, MHUW's community allocation process and the nationally recognized Denver's Road Home.

MHUW has incorporated evidence in the support of replication and expansion of grantees by working with school districts on designing and evaluating after-school models.

MHUW will support subgrantee capacity-building in leadership development, financial management, data management, strategic planning, and communications.

MHUW will facilitate learning and improvement across the portfolio of subgrantees and support subgrantees in achieving match requirements and sustainability by utilizing its strong relationships in the community.

MHUW and the Governor's Office are currently in discussions with local and national foundations and corporations to support the implementation of the Early Literacy SIF and the match requirements for subgrantees and partnering service organizations.

Program Design

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1. Goals and Objectives

The Mile High United Way Early Literacy Social Innovation Fund (Early Literacy SIF) is an ISSUE-BASED SIF focusing on YOUTH DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF COLORADO to increase the number of third graders reading at proficiency in Colorado's 47 rural counties and 17 urban counties.

Our nation is facing an educational crisis. Our continued failure to adequately educate our young people is leading to their inability to find good jobs in the competitive global economy. High school dropouts find a labor market stacked against them: a 31.5 percent unemployment rate versus an overall unemployment rate of 8.8 percent (U.S. Census Bureau 2010; Bureau of Labor Statistics 2011). Failing to graduate from high school is highly correlated with future involvement with the criminal justice system (Reading Foundation). These consequences are suffered disproportionately by Hispanics and African Americans, who drop out at rates much higher than their Caucasian peers.

As a result, the U.S. Department of Education encouraged states to solve the dire problem of low educational attainment. Colorado took this charge seriously and has been highlighted by education reformers across the country as a leader in this movement. Last year, Senate Bill 10-191 thrust Colorado into the spotlight with a state-level legislative policy initiative linking teacher and principal evaluations to student performance measures. While SB 10-191 is significant, it is only one piece of a comprehensive vision for fixing Colorado's failing education system.

With a large and growing Hispanic population in Colorado and the American Southwest face becoming what one demography scholar calls "The Appalachia of the 21st century." Hispanic students in Colorado have a dropout rate of 49 percent nearly double the overall high school dropout rate in the state. As demographics change and Hispanic students become the majority in Colorado public schools, the number of high school dropouts is expected to continue to rise unless significant reforms are made. The 17,400-member dropout class of 2009 already faces lost earnings estimated at a cumulative \$4.5 billion over the course of the lives of its members (Colorado Succeeds, 2010).

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Further complicating matters is the Colorado Paradox: Colorado has one of the most highly educated workforces in the country yet ranks among the lowest states in high school graduation rates. Colorado ranks third in the nation in percentage of the adult population with a four-year degree or higher but 46th in high school completion with only 75 percent in 2009. The number is even more startling in some of our highest-need communities: Denver Public Schools graduates only 51.8 percent of its students, while one of our rural targets, Garfield County, fares only slightly better at 60 percent (Colorado Department of Education 2010).

Research shows that we can predict which students will drop out, with a high degree of reliability, years before they even reach high school. This is where the Mile High United Way (MHUW) focus on third grade literacy becomes critical, and its alignment with the education agenda of Colorado will promote changes that are not piecemeal and temporary, but rather systematic and permanent.

"Poor reading ability in the early grades is clearly linked to high school dropouts" (Jerald 2006). As highlighted in various studies, students who are not reading proficiently in the early grades typically do not catch up as they transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Once this transition happens, students who are behind find schoolwork more challenging, which can lead to course failure, disengagement from school, and the potential for dropout. Research shows that 75 percent of children entering fourth grade reading at a first- or second-grade level never catch up, putting these students in danger of failing to graduate from high school (KIDS COUNT, 2010).

For English Language Learners (ELL), 75 percent of whom are second- or third- generation Americans, only 6 percent are proficient in reading in English, driving home the need to improve reading instruction outside of the traditional classroom (Grantmakers for Education, 2010). Colorado saw a 163 percent increase in the number of ELL students from 1990-2000 from pre-K to fifth grade, and Colorado's ELL total growth rate over the past thirteen years was 297 percent. There is an opportunity to significantly increase proficiency levels if these children can be reading at grade level by kindergarten, and especially by the end of third grade (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005b;

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Colorado Department of Education, 2010).

Without significant reform starting with early literacy, Colorado will continue adding to the legions of high school dropouts. In the 2009-10 school year 28 percent of Colorado's fourth graders scored Below Basic on the reading section of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) and 30 percent scored Below Proficiency on 3rd grade reading on the Colorado Student Achievement Program (CSAP). In other words, more than a quarter of the Class of 2017 is already in the dropout pipeline (Colorado Succeeds, 2010).

Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Colorado Department of Education, MHUW has identified communities needing the most assistance to increase proficiency rates. MHUW has compiled a list of Colorado counties, weighted and ranked first by lowest rates of third grade literacy proficiency, then by highest percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, and finally by highest percentage of population with income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Denver County has the highest rate of third grade students scoring below proficiency at 49 percent, with 72.1 percent of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch, and 38 percent of the population with income below 200 percent of federal poverty levels. Denver is followed by 14 rural communities and 5 additional urban counties with 30 percent or greater rates of students scoring below proficiency on the CSAP. In these communities, free and reduced lunch percentages range from 26.3 to 76.2, and the relevant poverty metric ranges from 26 to 55 percent.

Given demands placed on federal, state and local government funds, Colorado is working to leverage investments by individuals, businesses, nonprofits and foundations to develop a systematic approach to education reform. Led by Lieutenant Governor Joe Garcia, Colorado has outlined three major priorities for reform, one of which is achieving full grade level literacy rates by the end of 3rd grade.

With strong bi-partisan political will led by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and the state legislature, Colorado is poised to deliver on the strong movement for reform by emphasizing

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coordination and communication among the stakeholder groups for whom the educational status quo is no longer an option. This top-down commitment to cross-sector reform efforts will ensure that the burden and the benefits of necessary capacity-building will be shared.

The Early Literacy SIF will identify and invest in organizations and programs in Colorado having a strong impact on literacy rates and providing assistance in training, management and support to mobilize people of faith, the corporate sector, older Americans, high school and college students, and local and national service volunteers in order to help replicate and expand programs demonstrating effectiveness.

An open and competitive RFP process will select subgrantee organizations throughout the State of Colorado that have the capacity to achieve at least a 25 percent increase in third grade reading proficiency levels by 2016, based on standardized testing in Colorado.

A community awareness and outreach plan will spread the vision of a cross-sector partnership. The ensuing community engagement initiative will provide the personnel and resources necessary to achieve full grade level literacy by the end of third grade. MHUW will ensure that evidence-based strategies are implemented with fidelity and consistency, and are monitored to demonstrate adequate impact. Utilizing MHUW's community partners and the 13 other Colorado United Way organizations will serve as a foundation to mobilize volunteers statewide. We will also engage with national service organizations to work with evidence-based programs to teach and train other volunteers. To track and evaluate our impact, MHUW will partner with a research institution providing third-party analysis and validation of data and findings. MHUW will enter data into the statewide system monitoring grade level reading in cooperation with Colorado Department of Education. Lastly, we will work with other systems-level organizations throughout the state to provide technical assistance and capacity-building for evidence-based practices and community mobilization.

Over the next five years, the Early Literacy SIF will showcase a systematic change in Colorado's early literacy initiatives. MHUW will coordinate early childhood education programs and service providers

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around a shared vision of early literacy proficiency and a standardized set of outcomes. This shared vision will result from the development of infrastructure to mobilize volunteers in organizations using evidence-based programs to improve early literacy proficiency rates throughout the 64 counties of Colorado.

Ultimately, the Early Literacy SIF will demonstrate an increase of 25 percent in third grade reading proficiency levels with an increase in subgrantee programs moving from preliminary evidence to conclusive impact and the replication and expansion of evidence-based programs for early grade literacy.

There is a strong body of research and relevant data to support the Early Literacy SIF approach to investment in early literacy, and to serve as benchmarks to assess whether our investments have increased reading proficiency by the end of third grade.

Other communities around the country have successfully mobilized volunteers to improve literacy rates, such as the Minnesota Reading Corps, Oregon's Start Making a Reader Today (SMART) Program, and Experience Corps. These models provide significant data and measurable outcomes to provide best practices guidance for The Early Literacy SIF.

Minnesota's Reading Corps program, Oregon's Start Making a Reader Today (SMART) program, and the Experience Corps program utilize different approaches, but have in common a commitment to engaging volunteers from the community to improve literacy rates. Minnesota utilizes highly trained AmeriCorps members to both tutor students and train volunteers to do the same. Oregon's program is structured more loosely and gives wide latitude for community members to use their best judgment, but provides basic training and guidance. Experience Corps recruits older Americans to receive training and give one-on-one literacy support to struggling students. The structures vary in design, and yet each program can point to exemplary increases in student performance. For example, Minnesota Reading Corps reports that in all grade levels, program participants' growth rates exceed expected growth rates. In a randomized, controlled study, SMART program participants averaged 62 words per minute,

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compared to 46 for the control group. Experience Corps participants showed statistically significant ($p < .05$) improvement of 40 percent in grade-specific reading skills. MHUW will use SIF money to invest in organizations that can produce similar results, and will contribute to the growing body of literature detailing the most effective approaches.

Given Colorado's broad-based education reform agenda that includes third grade literacy as a vital component, it is instructive to briefly consider the example of Florida as well. Florida faces demographic challenges similar to Colorado's, with a large and growing Hispanic population and an achievement gap between these students and their Caucasian peers. By emphasizing third grade literacy as part of a larger reform agenda, Florida has seen its Hispanic students improve an average of two and a half grade levels in the past decade, as measured by NAEP fourth grade reading results. Colorado's Hispanic students, by contrast, have improved less than one third of one grade level.

MHUW is committed to learning lessons from these pioneers and to using the momentum for reform in Colorado to achieve early childhood literacy across our state.

2. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

The Early Literacy SIF will help build an infrastructure to mobilize volunteers, donors and community members in evidence-based programs, and help increase the number of evidence-based programs with strong impact throughout the state. Further, it will increase capacity, technical assistance, and evaluation, disseminating information through MHUW's network to help increase access to these high-quality programs.

The Early Literacy SIF will conduct an open, competitive process that will be completed within a six-month time frame to attract a diverse pool of entities implementing programs showing at least preliminary levels of evidence in increasing early grade literacy rates. Successful applicants will expand and replicate efforts with the use of the SIF while increasing evidence levels from preliminary to moderate/strong.

To ensure a competitive subgranting process, MHUW will provide sufficient public notice of the

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availability of SIF subgrantee by working with the Governor and Lieutenant Governor Offices, Education Leadership Council, the Colorado Nonprofit Association, Colorado Association of Funders, the networks of 13 other United Ways located in Colorado, and the 31 Early Childhood Councils throughout the state of Colorado, among other early childhood education networks.

The selection process for subgrantees will be based on the service footprint in high-need counties as defined by: percentage of third grade students reading below proficiency, percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch and the percentage of population with income below 200 percent of federal poverty level in the last 12 months. Given the statewide nature of the Early Literacy SIF, MHUW anticipates that organizations serving multiple counties may apply. Based on data from the Colorado Department of Education, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Bureau Labor Statistics, MHUW has created a three-tier system to prioritize the communities with the highest need in Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3. Tier 1 represents the communities that have the highest need according to proficiency levels and poverty levels as defined above.

In Year One of the five year grant, the Early Literacy SIF will fund approximately 10-15 organizations with significant footprints in Tiers 1 and 2. The awards will range from \$100,000 to \$500,000.

As a component to the selection process, applicants will be responsible for demonstrating at least preliminary evidence through 1) outcome studies that track program participants through a service pipeline and measure participant responses at the end of the program; and 2) pre- and post-test research that determines whether participants have improved on an outcome of interest. While the minimum requirement will be preliminary evidence of effectiveness, organizations that demonstrate moderate to strong evidence will be given additional points under the scoring for Strong Potential for Replication or Expansion. All selected subgrantees will work closely with MHUW in collaboration with a research organization to undertake rigorous evaluations to improve the strength of their evidence.

The review and selection process will be completed within a six-month time span, starting by the end of August 2011 and announcing awards by February 2012. The contracts with subgrantees will be from

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March 2012 through February 2013, with additional years of funding contingent upon performance measures, federal funds available through the Corporation for National and Community Service, and ability to demonstrate 1:1 cash match.

The Early Literacy SIF subgranting process will consist of the following: 1) Compliance Review; 2) Initial Eligibility Review; 3) Expert Review; 4) Post-Expert Review Quality Control; 5) Selection of Applications for Internal Review; 6) Internal Review; and 7) Selection as Model by the review process of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Applicants will be scored on the basis of the following criteria: 1) impact areas in the three-tier system designed to target high-need, low-income, and underserved communities; 2) a strong theory of change; 3) strong leadership and financial and management systems, including data management; 4) a strong financial position, including funding diversity, the ability to meet the requirements for providing dollar-for-dollar matching funds, and the ability to sustain the initiative after the subgrant period concludes; 5) strong community relationships; 6) a commitment to and track record of using data and evaluation for performance and program improvement; 7) at least preliminary evidence of effectiveness, including a demonstrated track record of achieving specific measurable outcomes related to the measurable outcomes for the intermediary; 8) strong potential for and interest in replication or expansion; 9) a well-defined plan for achieving specific measurable outcomes connected to the measurable outcomes for the intermediary, evaluation of program effectiveness, performance improvement, and replication or expansion; and 10) a commitment to use grant funds to replicate, expand, or support their programs.

Since the Early Literacy SIF is part of a larger statewide effort to empower individuals and communities, reviewers for grant applications will include leaders from counties across Colorado demonstrating expertise in education and civic engagement, members of various boards and commissions appointed by the Governor, and program experts working with corporations and foundations to fund education efforts.

During any selection process, MHUW has participants and reviewers complete a full disclosure of

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any conflicts of interest. The structure of the review process with expert reviewers, post expert review quality control and internal review will prevent bias from individual reviewers on any given application.

3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

MHUW is committed to long-term relationships with subgrantees. Through the Early Literacy SIF, new relationships will be established and existing relationships strengthened as we work to improve early literacy rates.

MHUW will provide technical assistance and support that will increase the ability of subgrantees to achieve their measurable outcomes, including performance measurement, evaluation, validation, and replication or expansion through MHUW's evaluation team and various research institutions. MHUW intends to provide technical assistance on increasing subgrantees levels of evidence, using data for decision-making, implementing best practices, collaborating with other subgrantees, capacity-building, and scaling/expanding programs.

MHUW will work closely with subgrantees to monitor performance and to establish shared short- and long-term goals while communicating and negotiating modifications. The initial RFP process to select subgrantees will be highly prescriptive, with clear expectations on the required level of participant commitment. MHUW's evaluation team and an independent research institution will assist with data design and the specific grade level reading metrics. Regular meetings will be scheduled via in-person visits and conference calling for selected organizations throughout Colorado. As part of the monitoring and communication process, MHUW will work with Colorado Department of Education to provide information back to grantees about outcomes and student testing scores.

MHUW will support subgrantee capacity-building in leadership development, financial management, data management, strategic planning, and communications. MHUW will partner with the other 13 United Ways in Colorado, the Colorado Nonprofit Association, and the higher education system to provide assistance with leadership development and strategic planning. MHUW plans to contract with a research firm and team with local universities to assist in the structuring of contracts and data

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requirements in an outcomes-based approach.

MHUW will facilitate learning and improvement across the portfolio of subgrantees by bringing together subgrantees in their own communities, as well as by sharing and learning in the United Way Worldwide Performance Excellence Group for Early Grade Reading.

MHUW will support subgrantees in achieving match requirements and sustainability by utilizing its strong relationships in the community, for example Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC), a cross-sector coalition that is committed to making early childhood care, education, health, and parenting among the highest priorities for Colorado's public and private investments. MHUW and the Governor's Office are currently in discussions with local and national foundations and corporations to support the implementation of the Early Literacy SIF and the match requirements for subgrantees and partnering service organizations.

Accountability for all parties is paramount to the success of the Early Literacy SIF. MHUW will work closely with our internal evaluation department, an independent research firm and local research universities to develop contracts and data metrics for each grantee, while engaging with the Colorado Department of Education to develop effectiveness measures. While original subgrantees will be selected with a minimum evidence level of preliminary, the overall objective is to increase the number of moderate and strong evidence programs that can be replicated at the state and national levels.

The Early Literacy SIF will establish an evaluation committee composed of business leaders, local evaluators, state board members and commissions, and other interested community members to oversee the evaluation process and ensure the use of best practices.

4. USE OF EVIDENCE

MHUW has a history of applying evidence produced by rigorous evaluations to decision-making and to improving specific programs within this issue area, such as Making Connections-Denver funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, MHUW's community allocation process, and Denver's Road Home.

At the Making Connections-Denver program at Harrington Elementary, Metis Associates evaluation

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of reading intervention strategies is expanding the base of evidence for particular interventions. Using Propensity Score Matching (PSM), Metis is comparing control group reading scores to a group of similar students who received the intervention. Propensity Score Matching is a highly rigorous method, just short of a randomized trial, that ensures the comparison group utilized is not different from the group receiving the intervention. Using this method, we have a high level of confidence that the gains realized in student achievement are the result of the intervention in question rather than extraneous factors or differences between the intervention and PSM control groups. Once Metis has finished collecting and analyzing the data, the report will inform strategies at Harrington, with lessons filtering up to the district, state, and national levels. Foundations Inc. "Grade Level Reading: An Action Framework for School and District Leaders" 2011. <http://wwwFOUNDATIONSINC.org>).

In addition to Making Connections-Denver, MHUW has a history of applying evidence produced by rigorous evaluations to decision-making and to improving specific programs within the annual community fund allocation process. MHUW incorporates evidence into the selection of grantees during the design-phase of the RFP and in the development of application scoring criteria. In the MHUW community allocations process, grantees were required to explain models of service delivery that they were proposing for funding. Those agencies whose models used evidence-based strategies were selected in the School Readiness category, such as HIPPPY, Strengthening Families, and Parents as Teachers. After grantees have been selected, MHUW works with them to develop outcomes-based contracts, and helps to design the data management and evaluation plan.

In order to validate grantee evidence, MHUW links the evidence used for selection (as outlined in the MHUW Impact Plan) with performance measures. For instance, MHUW has preliminary evidence suggesting that attendance is an important factor for literacy rates and academic achievement, thus School Readiness agencies report on the number and percentage of their participants attending school 90 percent of the time or more and advancing to the next grade level. MHUW validates by linking the preliminary evidence to the investments (e.g. if programs result in greater attendance, we can infer that

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the programs also contribute to greater educational outcomes) and by validating directly (e.g. investments yielding greater grade progression among low-income youth). MHUW can validate investments and replicate the successful strategies with additional funding investments.

MHUW has incorporated evidence in the support of replication and expansion of grantees by working with school districts on designing and evaluating after-school models. When research in Denver showed that the nearly 9,000 participants in the Lights On After School program received higher test scores and improve their school-day attendance as a result of the program, MHUW expanded the program into two additional counties with more expansion planned.

MHUW has used rigorous evidence in the design, implementation and sustainability planning process in its key partnership with City and County of Denver's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, Denver's Road Home (DRH). DRH contracted with OMNI Institute to examine the establishment of a plan and a methodology to achieve adequate data for the program's complex evaluative needs. In the first phase, OMNI partnered with the State of Colorado and the University of Colorado at Denver to develop a web-based system that streamlined data collection from Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS), the primary source of data, and facilitated ongoing tracking and monitoring of the goals, objectives and outcomes as outlined in the Ten Year Plan.

The report generated by OMNI provided DRH and its partners a snapshot on general homelessness trends in Denver by analyzing HMIS data from March 2008. While this was not a longitudinal study using historical data, it demonstrated our successful collaboration with service providers, with significant improvements in HMIS data quality thanks to technical assistance and increased provider participation. OMNI worked with DRH on the development of procedures to merge, eliminate duplication, clean, code, and analyze HMIS data in accordance with the Ten Year Plan. The report also gave important insight into how the HMIS can be better used as an evaluative tool, and described the need for DRH to engage in a more rigorous, long-term evaluation strategy. OMNI's report "Evaluating DRH: Building a More Effective Methodology" created in 2008 is available upon request as it is not

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available online.

Currently, DRH is developing a more rigorous, long-term evaluation plan in partnership with University of Colorado Denver. In this next phase of evaluation, the following questions will be explored: 1) proportions of people served by DRH still housed, 2) impact and potential cost avoidance/savings on the larger service delivery system when the homeless are moved into housing with services, 3) percentages of people who are receiving prevention services still housed, 4) percentages of people who have acquired benefits, 5) increase in the demand for services in specific populations, and 5) length of time in supportive housing and associated costs.

DRH is also partnering with the University of Denver's Daniels College of Business to develop a business investment thesis for DRH to be utilized in designing a sustainability framework.

In March 2010, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development completed a study entitled "Strategies for Improving Homeless People's Access to Mainstream Benefits and Services" ([http://www.huduser.org/publications/pdf/StrategiesAccessBenefits Services.pdf](http://www.huduser.org/publications/pdf/StrategiesAccessBenefits%20Services.pdf)).

In general, the study found that the umbrella structure of DRH makes it "a strong mechanism for expanding, changing and smoothing access to mainstream benefits, with its ability to raise funds in the private sector, bring the provider community together, and advocate for policy changes."

MHUU will use evidence, data and evaluation tools to evaluate our own efforts and monitor our work towards the attainment of our goal of a 25 percent increase in third grade reading level proficiency; and the investigation of factors facilitating progress, or barriers to reaching that goal.

MHUU intends to work with an outside evaluator to monitor our progress and highlight facilitating factors and best practices emerging from the initiative so those can be incorporated into regular grantmaking and support practices in the future and shared with partner organizations. Potential areas to monitor include the clarity of subgrantee selection process and success in identifying programs with at least a preliminary level of evidence of program effectiveness, state-level collaboration on data sharing, success of incorporating use of volunteers into evidence-based practices, technical assistance

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provided for and subgrantee success in obtaining matching grants for this initiative, collaboration building and information sharing across subgrantees, emerging strengths or barriers to subgrantee success, and support provided for and success of replication efforts for subgrantees. Through further discussion and refinement, certain stages of the work may become deeper foci of the evaluation.

As part of the selection process, potential subgrantees will be asked to submit documentation of any existing evidence of impact and effectiveness of their programs. This should include any studies undertaken and results of those studies, whether published or unpublished, or evidence derived through program practice, such as looking at program data pre- and post-intervention or looking at intra-program successes using either administratively collected program data or data collected explicitly to prove effectiveness.

An evaluation rubric will be created to rank levels of evidence demonstrated by subgrantees. The MHUW Evaluation Team will assist the selection panel in ranking subgrantees by level of evidence, ensuring at least a preliminary level of evidence is demonstrated based on the definition provided in this NOFO. A well-articulated theory of change will also be required to describe expectations for program implementation and outcomes. MHUW is creating a research and evaluation advisory panel and will utilize the expertise of that panel to create the rubric and ensure subgrantees are appropriately ranked.

As MHUW intends to focus primarily on those subgrantees with preliminary levels of evidence, we will work with grantees to establish research partners and engage in more rigorous evaluation of their programs with the intent to move subgrantees to a higher level of evidence. MHUW's project and evaluation teams will work closely with external researchers to establish meaningful evaluation plans. These studies will pay close attention not only to outcomes achieved by program participants but also to implementation. It is important to consider how the program is being implemented to ensure that program practices are replicable at higher volume in the current setting, or more broadly in diverse settings. As results of these studies become available, MHUW project and evaluation teams will continue to work closely with subgrantees to consider implications of those results for program replication and

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monitoring.

Only after moderate or strong levels of evidence demonstrating effectiveness are established will efforts to monitor and replicate be put in place. Based on findings of impact and consideration of program implementation, MHUW and its research partners will work with subgrantees to establish ongoing monitoring of program implementation to ensure that subgrantees continue to operate with fidelity to the original intervention. Subgrantees will be required to put in place program fidelity and outcomes monitoring systems. MHUW will work with grantees on the design and establishment of those systems and require reporting from those systems on a routine basis.

Additionally, recognized best practice in implementation of evidence-based programs will be promoted to ensure the ongoing success of subgrantees. These include standards for staff selection, training and coaching, and administrative supports. An overview of practices in the field of Implementation is provided in *Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature* (Fixen, D. et al, 2005. <<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~nirn/>>). MHUW will provide technical assistance in the design, implementation and ongoing use of these systems.

MHUW will help subgrantees invest in improving performance and achieving at least moderate levels of evidence through appropriate data collection and evaluation. MHUW will do this by facilitating data sharing agreements within and between school districts and with the Colorado Department of Education. These data sharing agreements between organizations, providers and the school districts will help provide individual data records that can be used in quasi-experimental studies working to correlate gains measured in specific programs with standardized testing scores. With these data sharing agreements, MHUW will contribute to movement towards moderate levels of evidence. Without access to the school performance data, agencies will be unable to make direct causal links between their programs and academic performance.

MHUW will support funding and technical assistance to help with data collection with individual subgrantees. Also, MHUW will partner with a research institution(s) to find instruments to use as a

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baseline before interventions and help design control groups and intervention groups.

MHUW will help grantees design performance measurements and evaluation systems appropriate to the developmental stage of the program by first ensuring that validation or effectiveness studies are completed and implementation and outcome data from those studies are fully understood. By looking at the program implementation practices (e.g., duration and level of program intervention received) and level of impact achieved by program participants in those studies, ongoing performance systems can be designed to monitor how the program is operating. Initially the program must be studied to understand what program practices lead to which outcomes and at what level. Knowing results of these effectiveness studies will guide the establishment of realistic performance thresholds for what the intervention is and how much of the intervention a participant should receive and at what level outcomes are expected.

MHUW has a long track record of sharing and integrating lessons from evaluations across grantees, partners, and other funding organizations. MHUW has been involved in various learning communities with United Way Worldwide, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

MHUW attends multiple conferences throughout the year to present and discuss its focus issues of School Readiness, Youth Success and Adult Self Sufficiency. Additionally, MHUW frequently brings together existing grantees in specific focus areas and brings in appropriate training and technical assistance. For instance, MHUW convenes all of the DRH grantees into a town hall meeting on a monthly basis to share best practices and emerging concerns in the community. MHUW also works with the Resource Allocation Committee of DRH to review reports and discuss funding recommendations based off of lessons learned through the evaluation processes.

4. COMMUNITY RESOURCES N/A

Organizational Capacity

1. Ability to Provide Program Oversight

The Early Literacy SIF is designed to utilize the key competencies of MHUW to complement the

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statewide effort in collaboration with the Governor John Hickenlooper's office to increase early grade literacy rates in the State of Colorado.

Using MHUW's history of strategic grantmaking, program management, community and volunteer engagement, program evaluation, the Early Literacy SIF will help identify programs, organizations and strategies already showing preliminary evidence of effectiveness in increasing third grade reading proficiency rates from urban and rural counties from across the state. By identifying programs with at least preliminary levels of evidence or better, the SIF funds will be used to increase the levels of evidence of organizations, replicate and expand programs, and mobilize local / national volunteers and service organizations to increase capacity and to ensure that every child in the State of Colorado is reading at proficiency by the end of the third grade.

MHUW works directly with families, neighborhoods, and hundreds of partner agencies in metro Denver and throughout Colorado to help people of all ages and in stages of their lives by maximizing the collective power of donors, experts, and community partners to effect positive change in our community. MHUW also advocates on policy issues effecting system changes with our community.

This is a role that MHUW has been playing for over 123 years. MHUW is the first United Way in the country and was founded in 1887 by a group of visionary community leaders who recognized that together we can do more to advance the common good than we can do as individuals.

MHUW has continued to grow and evolve as a force in the community through groundbreaking collaborations and innovative programs while still staying connected to our roots of engaging donors through businesses and funding nonprofit agencies and community collaborations. MHUW has strategically evolved from solely operating as a fundraising organization to an organization convening and creating measurable impact in our community. Today, this translates into three key areas of investment focused on the building blocks to a thriving community: School Readiness, Youth Success and Adult Self Sufficiency.

The Early Literacy SIF will build on the expertise and focus already placed on early literacy through

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MHUU's School Readiness Initiative with the goal that young children in low income families enter school ready to succeed and are prepared for a lifetime of learning.

In fiscal year 2010, MHUU raised more than \$38 million of which over 85% was invested directly into the community. MHUU used an open, competitive investment process beginning with an open call for proposals to invest in the community. The priority areas: School Readiness, Youth Success and Adult Self Sufficiency were determined by extensive community research and input affirming these community needs. Funding recommendations were determined through a thorough review process conducted by panels of MHUU stakeholders, community members and volunteers, and approved by the MHUU Board of Trustees. Of the 112 organizations receiving funding, 56 are first-time United Way recipients. MHUU's Community Investment portfolio now includes long-established agencies in the metro Denver area and some newer, innovative organizations with proven successes. In fiscal year 2011, MHUU funded 30 agencies through our School Readiness Initiative totaling \$2,075,000 with another \$3,961,857 invested through community collaborations.

MHUU currently partners with Denver Public Schools, Jefferson County Public Schools, and Adams County School District 14 to serve student in those school districts through Lights On After School, a community partnership created to improve academic performance and school attendance among low-income youth through school based after-school programs.

Through the work of Making Connections Denver supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, MHUU has worked intensively with the principal of Harrington Elementary School to improve attendance and grade level reading. This has resulted in a change in attitude and practices at the school with an increase in student attendance. Additionally literacy team meetings have been established that bring together diverse group of stakeholders at the school to discuss strategies around improving grade level reading.

MHUU works with others on community-change strategies to achieve community grade reading goals and other education issues as demonstrated through our work with Executives Partnering to

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Invest in Children (EPIC), the various Early Childhood Councils throughout the State of Colorado, and Early Learning Ventures (ELV).

Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC) is a coalition of business leaders, nonprofits and foundations who are committed to making early childhood care, education, health, and parenting among the highest priorities of Colorado's public and private investments. Focusing on children from birth to age eight, EPIC targets the youngest population in order to see the greatest impact. MHUW is one of the convening organizations of EPIC with Colorado Children's Campaign, Colorado Concern, the David and Laura Merage Foundation, Telluride Foundation, and Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation.

Serving 55 counties, Colorado's 31 Early Childhood Councils provide the foundation necessary for agencies and service providers to work together to build an infrastructure to deliver services and supports to our youngest children and their families. As a result, efficiencies are realized throughout the system, resources are coordinated and leveraged, decisions are strategic and long-term, and services are aligned minimizing duplication. With sustainability of high quality services as a goal, chances for successful outcomes for children have increased. MHUW has served as the fiscal sponsor of the Denver Early Childhood Council and works closely with the other 30 Early Childhood Councils throughout the state.

Early Learning Ventures (ELV) is a new collaboration with MHUW, created and funded by the David and Laura Merage Foundation. ELV uses a results-oriented business approach to create sustainable change in the Early Care and Education (ECE) industry through a model of shared services. Sustainability is one of the most important elements of the Early Learning Ventures model, and projections show that with proper planning and execution, participants should be financially self-sustaining after three years.

To achieve the objective of universal access to high quality early care and education, Early Learning Ventures is launching Alliances across the State of Colorado. Alliances are community-based, shared services networks of centers and family child care homes working together to strengthen both the

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quality and sustainability of their programs. Their long term goal is to blanket the state with 30 regional Alliances, which have the potential to impact over 5,000 small early care and education businesses, employ 22,625 professionals, and serve 180,000 of Colorado's children ages birth to five with parents in the workforce. The ELV Alliance Venture Fund at MHUW takes one big step toward reaching this goal, by providing a source for planning and start-up grants to ELV Alliances across the State of Colorado.

The ELV Platform dramatically increases efficiencies and allows small businesses to gain economies of scale by providing discounts on classroom supplies, materials, and travel; pre-developed marketing materials, contracts, business plans, and human resources documents; links to immunization websites; ECE book recommendations; quality rating programs and tips for site improvement; access to the state food program forms; free e-Learning courses that meet licensing requirements; and community discussion boards.

MHUW has a history and strong foundation in ECE investments. From these investments, we have developed a strong volunteer leadership group to advocate on behalf of early childhood education at the Colorado State Capitol. The Birth to Five policy alliance funding has allowed MHUW to focus on the engagement of business leaders around ECE issues. Additionally, the Birth to Five has helped us engage other United Ways across the state to collaborate around ECE issues in their local communities while engaging volunteers.

Based off of the Birth to Five work, Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC), mentioned above, was created to engage business leaders and to have more business leaders appointed to the Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) whose purpose is to improve outcomes for young children ages birth to eight and their families by advancing the alignment, coordination, and efficiency of programs and services.

Building on the early success of a five-year demonstration project, Ready to Succeed, and recommendations from the Governor's Business Commission on Child Care Financing, MHUW joined a coalition of business, philanthropic, religious and other community leaders to create a market driven,

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quality improvement and accountability system that prepares children to succeed. A four-star Quality Rating System was created to enable families to make better decisions about the quality of their child's out-of-home care. MHUW provided staff support to the initiative, participated on the project team and assisted with the fundraising.

Additionally, MHUW has mobilized individuals to volunteer and advocate about early grade reading and education issues through a Day on the Hill. The 4th Annual Colorado United Ways' Day on the Hill attracted 50 leaders from the community, nonprofit, government and business sectors, all passionate about the future of education in our state.

The day-long event took place in and around the state capitol in downtown Denver. It was a unique opportunity for supporters of the United Way movement from across Colorado to join together to advocate for effective government programs and policies designed to advance the common good for everyone in our state. As leading impact organizations in Colorado, the United Ways recognize that working for the common good requires more than money. Engaging the more than 10,000 business and community partners of local United Ways to build partnerships with policy makers is critical for identifying and implementing practical, long-term solutions for families and children in Colorado. The ultimate goal is providing high quality educational opportunities for all children, from birth through high school graduation.

As a programmatic partner and fiscal sponsor of Denver's Road Home (DRH), MHUW has been effective in our investment approach as demonstrated by the measurable outcome of a 68% reduction in chronic homelessness since 2005. DRH is a model for replication regionally in Colorado and throughout the country. DRH participates in national leadership communities, has hosted cities from across the country looking to replicate the model, has been highlighted as a success story by the Council on Foundations and received this highest award in the Colorado philanthropic community in 2010: the Spencer and Julie Penrose Award by the El Pomar Foundation for the "State's Top Nonprofit."

MHUW has evaluation and programmatic resources and staff available to assist with subgrantee

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replication or expansion. MHUW has a three person Evaluation Team in place that will assist with the evidence and evaluation components of this initiative, and a data system that can be utilized to monitor performance of grantees. The CTK data system is accessible to each subgrantee for direct data entry and can be configured to the specific needs of data collection for this effort. Additionally, MHUW is in process of building a Research and Evaluation Advisory Council to provide input and guidance on evaluation components of the initiative and intends to leverage existing relationships with area universities to support subgrantees in their efforts to obtain the next level of evidence of effectiveness for their programs.

Technical assistance will be lead by the project manager and depending on the number of subgrantees MHUW is working with, additional staff may be hired. Additionally, MHUW is exploring working with the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) on a contract basis to provide training on implementation.

MHUW has capacity to implement the proposed evaluation plan with our existing 3-person evaluation team and multiple strong relationships with area universities and evaluation organizations. The Director of Evaluations has recently joined MHUW and has 15 years experience with implementation of evidence-based programs, research and evaluation. Two of the other team members have worked extensively on the Making Connections Denver efforts supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. MHUW has an existing data system (CTK) that can be leveraged for data collection and monitoring for this initiative.

MHUW has a strong ability to support and oversee multiple programs at different locations particularly with existing partnerships with other United Ways in Colorado and will work in collaboration with their staff (including evaluation staff where that available). Additionally, MHUW has a strong IT department and is working to increase the IT infrastructure what will facilitate long distance collaboration tools or other conferencing/webinar technologies. MHUW's existing CTK data collection system can be accessed from any location with internet access. This technology will facilitate sharing of

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subgrantee level information across partners collaborating on this initiative.

MHUW management and staff structure is in place to conduct the work outlined in the Program Design section. Lead by President and CEO, Christine Benero, MHUW has 100 full-time employees consisting of: 22 Donor Relations staff members responsible for fundraising; 43 Community Investments program staff comprised of 22 program staff working with initiatives and programs, 3 evaluators, and 18 staff members supporting the Colorado 2-1-1 Call Center; a 15 member Finance Department with 2 grants administrators and half of the 15-member staff supporting campaign pledge processing; 6 staff members in Marketing, and 14 staff members in Executive, Human Resources, IT and Facilities positions. While supporting an overall budget of \$38 million, Mile High United Way is proud that .85 of every dollar invested goes back into the community.

The Board of Trustees, administrators and staff members will provide support and expertise in fundraising, grant making, community engagement particularly with the business and foundation communities, service on Boards and Commissions, and the establishment and operations of an Evaluation Committee.

The following are key staff members of MHUW relevant to the Early Literacy Social Innovation Fund:

Christine Benero, President and CEO of MHUW, served as the former CEO of American Red Cross Mile High Chapter and Director of the Office of Public Liaison for the Corporation for National and Community Service. She served in two Presidential administrations: Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, and served as VP of the National Civic League.

Christine is the Past Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Women's Foundation of Colorado, chaired the Governor's Commission on National and Community Service, is a member of the Board of Directors of the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce Leadership Foundation, the National Civic League, and Community Wealth Ventures.

Christine holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education from Boston University, a Masters

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in Education from Harvard University, Graduate School of Education and was selected as a 2007 Gates Fellow for the Senior Executive Program at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.

Jerene Petersen, Vice President of Community Investments, has a Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Texas and over 25 years of experience working with non-profit organizations. Jerene worked on Denver's Road Home and was responsible for the allocation of funds, program monitoring and evaluation. Her strength is outcome and program design to drive impact in our community. She was awarded the Executive Director of the Year award by the National Network for Homeless and Runaway Youth in 2004. For the Early Literacy SIF, Jerene will play an oversight role as the head of the Community Investments Division.

Lindsey Morgan Tracy, Senior Director of Community Investments, will spearhead the Early Literacy SIF program and manage the statewide outreach initiatives on behalf of MHUW. Lindsey started her career as a high school teacher and coach in northern Colorado. Following her 2 years in public education and several business ventures, Lindsey moved into college administration for Johnson & Wales University in east Denver. There, Lindsey served as the director of public relations and community affairs for 9 years. In addition to her work in the education realm, Lindsey has dedicated much of her time to community service. She has served on the Colorado Governor's Commission on Community Service for 6 years and currently serves as Chair for the 16-person appointed statewide board. For the Early Literacy SIF, Lindsey will oversee all community work with stakeholder and partners to develop protocols and the subgranting process.

Diana Romero-Campbell, Director of School Readiness, is a National Hispana Leadership Fellow with recognized statewide and national expertise in early childhood systems building, the development of statewide home visitation program and training including a youth development program area for local foundations. Diana oversees critical School Readiness efforts. For the Early Literacy SIF, Diana will work closely with the Early Childhood Councils and ELV Alliances across Colorado around best practice models.

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A Program Officer will be hired for the Early Literacy SIF providing programmatic support to Lindsey Morgan Tracy, Senior Director of Community Investments. The program officer will be the point person for grantees and other technical assistance questions for applicant organizations and subgrantees.

Cindy Eby, Director of Evaluation, has over 15 years experience in implementation of evidence-based programs, program evaluation and health services research. Her most recent work includes leadership of evaluation and assurance of quality implementation of national programs for Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), one of the premier evidence-based programs brought to scale on a national level. She received her Masters of Arts in Sociology with a focus on applied research from University of Denver where she was appointed to the Denver Drug Court sub-committee on Evaluation. For the Early Literacy SIF, Cindy will provide her expertise developing and executing the evaluation plan outlined in this application and working closely with the independent research institution.

Thomas Sheehy, Database Coordinator, was a Public Policy and International Affairs Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public Policy and International Studies at Princeton University with intensive coursework in microeconomics, statistics, and public policy analysis. Thomas has worked on similar efforts include overseeing various evaluations such as a ten-year longitudinal cross-site survey, community change initiatives, and community impact designs and implementing data systems and evaluation plans. For the Early Literacy SIF, Thomas will support the larger evaluation work led by Cindy Eby and the independent research institution.

Desta Taye-Channel, Volunteer Coordinator, has extensive experience building mentoring and other volunteer programs with over 10 years of experience with non-profits in various roles from providing direct services to managing program and coordinating services with multiple agencies. For the Early Literacy SIF, Desta will work with corporate business partners to develop volunteer opportunities around early grade literacy and subgrantees.

A Manager of Statewide Civic Engagement position will be hired for the Early Literacy SIF to work closely with Desta to develop volunteer bases in communities across Colorado. The Civic Engagement

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staff members will provide technical assistance for volunteer efforts and coordinate with local and national service organizations.

Robert Thompson, Director of Media Relations, has spent the past 7-years working in nonprofit media and public relations first for the American Red Cross and now for Mile High United Way. Prior to his nonprofit work, Robert was a television news reporter and anchor for more than 15-years. For the Early Literacy SIF, Robert will oversee the development of a statewide communications strategy and public awareness campaign for early grade literacy.

Mile High United Way will also have staff members supporting the Early Literacy Social Innovation Fund from the Finance, IT Department, and Human Resources as well as support positions when meetings and trainings are held in the MHUW facility.

MHUW has extensive experience monitoring grantees for program and outcome compliance. All Community Investment Partners selected through the allocation process and Denver's Road Home Partners submit quarterly outcome reports by means of MHUW's online data manager by CTK (Community TechKnowledge). Quarterly reports are reviewed by grant managers, Initiative Directors and data/evaluation staff to ensure each program is making acceptable progress toward stated goals. Each program participates in at least one annual site-visit with multiple visits and contacts being the norm. Interaction with partners is both proactive to build relationships and offer training as well as to address specific compliance issues that may arise through quarterly reports.

In fiscal year 2010, MHUW managed a budget of \$38 million with \$2.4 million in federal, state, and local grant funds; \$14.4 million in restricted funds; and \$8.6 million in donor designated funds distributed to other non-profit organizations. An annual audit is conducted to review for OMB A-133 compliance. MHUW's Finance team has 2 dedicated staff members for the financial management of grants and contracts. In recent years, MHUW has shown its ability to manage grants with city contracts, as the fiscal sponsor of Denver's Road Home (DRH), through Making Connections Denver with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and having been awarded the Department of Health and Human Services:

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Asset for Independence Demonstration Program for the fifth time.

2. Ability to Provide Financial Oversight

MHUW has a history of administering federal grant programs and of having an annual audit conducted in accordance with the Single Audit Act and OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations. For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2010, we expended approximately \$1.4 million in federal awards. MHUW received an unqualified opinion on our June 30, 2010 financial statements and on our compliance with requirements related to major programs. In addition, MHUW's independent auditors reported no significant deficiencies, material weaknesses, or audit findings required to be reported in accordance with Section 510(a) of OMB Circular A-133.

Leslie Hannon, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) holds an (inactive) Certified Public Accountant license in Colorado and has over 14 years of experience working for non-profit organizations. Leslie has extensive experience in administering federal award programs, and for the past two years has had responsibility for overseeing federal award programs and restricted funding at MHUW. The CFO will work with the Director of Finance to develop an effective system of fiscal oversight of Early Literacy SIF grant.

Darren Dodson, Director of Finance will play an active role in designing a program of administration and oversight of the Early Literacy SIF grant and subgrantees. Darren is a licensed CPA and, prior to joining MHUW, had 16 years of experience performing audits of federal award programs in accordance with the Single Audit Act and OMB Circular A-133. In his role as an auditor, Darren gained extensive experience developing, evaluating and testing internal controls over, and compliance with, federal grant compliance requirements. He also gained an in-depth knowledge of relevant compliance requirements, including those concerning allowable costs as prescribed by OMB Circular A-122, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations, and sub-recipient monitoring.

Ratna Taylor, Grants Manager will devote almost a third of her time to the day-to-day administration of the grant and monitoring of subgrantees. She has experience preparing and monitoring budgets for

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federal and non-federal grant programs, preparing financial reports, and reviewing for allowable costs. She will utilize this experience in performing the day-to-day monitoring activities of subgrantees.

The MHUW annual budget has historically approximated \$35.5 million; this grant and MHUW match would increase the budget to approximately \$39.1 million. This request for federal funding of \$1.8 million represents 4.6% of the budget. The implications of this grant to MHUW include the hiring a Program Officer and a Manager of Statewide Civic Engagement. The budget request includes a salary level for each position designed to attract qualified candidates. MHUW currently has internal capacity to address all other programmatic and fiscal aspects of the program.

The process of ensuring compliance with federal grant requirements will occur on two levels: at MHUW and at subgrantees. As described previously, MHUW has experience administering federal award programs and has a history of unqualified audit opinions on compliance with federal grant requirements. The program and accounting personnel will work together to ensure that all relevant personnel are familiar with the specific compliance requirements related to this grant. The Grants Manager will take the lead in ensuring that our existing system of internal control over federal grant compliance is implemented for this program, and developing procedures for any unique compliance considerations such as subgrantee monitoring.

Subgrantees will be informed that they are receiving federal grant funds during the competitive bid process. Once awarded, MHUW's contracts with subgrantees will contain information on the federal program, allowable costs, the subgrantees responsibility for compliance, and audit requirements under the Single Audit Act. MHUW will carry out sub-grantee monitoring through a combination of performing site visits, requiring monthly financial reports from subgrantees, and requiring periodic reporting from subgrantees on the outcomes of their programs.

Within the MHUW accounting system, four tracking numbers will be created for the grant: two unique IDs for the subgrantees match and non-match and two unique ID numbers to track other costs associated with Federal and match dollars. On a monthly basis, accounting and program personnel

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meet to review grant financials and to discuss the status of each grant.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

1. Budget and Program Design

MHUW plans to match CNCS funding at the required ratio of 1:1. As part of this grant proposal, MHUW has included a letter verifying cash match on-hand covering 50% of the requested amount. The intent is to raise match funds from diverse non-Federal sources through key community partners to financially support the work of the Early Literacy SIF and the long-term sustainability of this effort.

MHUW designed the budget to implement the program on a statewide basis. MHUW has defined roles for each individual that will devote time and resources to this program, and has included appropriate amounts in the budget request to fund the related activities that will ultimately result in desired outcomes for the program. MHUW budgeted staff time and resources to provide for technical assistance to subgrantees, including both programmatic and financial administration support. For evaluation, MHUW expects to contract with a qualified educational institution to provide that service and have included those costs in the budget.

MHUW designed the budget proposal so that federal grant funds are used to pay awards to subgrantees and salary and benefits for direct program personnel. MHUW will hire a program officer (\$70,000 base compensation) and a manager of statewide civic engagement (\$40,000 base compensation). These positions are critical to the success of the program on a state-wide basis and their responsibilities are described in the organizational capacity section of this document. MHUW believes using federal dollars for these positions will create greater incentive for additional local partners to invest in the subgrantees.

MHUW will select subgrantees from across the State through an open competitive process primarily online. In order to ensure that the greatest possible amount of funds are reaching innovative programs, MHUW designed the program to allow for greater than minimally required amount of federal funds being invested through sub-grants. Eighty-three percent (\$3,000,000) of the total budget will be

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distributed to subgrantees through the competitive bid process. This includes \$1,500,000 of the federal funds and \$1,500,000 of match funds. MHUW anticipates the bid process will require 20 - 30 individuals (volunteers, board members, and staff) to review sub-grantee applications. Excluding labor costs built into the salary and benefits budget, the external costs of this process are estimated to be \$3,000 based on anticipation of printing and copying costs for the review panel.

In addition to the costs of the bid process, MHUW will fund all other costs of administering the program such as costs associated with travel, meetings, supplies, contractual and consultant services, and staff training and development.

At the time of application MHUW does not anticipate programs costs to be higher due to service areas of Colorado that are significantly philanthropically underserved. Through the subgrantee selection process, MHUW will take into consideration the existing infrastructure of organizations when creating program contracts.

2. Match Sources

MHUW is meeting weekly with a work group comprised of foundations and private funders through the Governor's office to establish a fundraising plan for the statewide strategy including the Early Literacy SIF.

Currently, MHUW receives funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to cover staff costs associated with our literacy work. Starting in fall 2011, MHUW will incorporate the Early Literacy SIF into MHUW's annual giving campaign that raises over \$30 million dollars each year from individuals, corporations, foundations, government sources, and special events.

MHUW has a diversified fundraising strategy to mobilize support from the entire metro Denver community to advance the common good. This year, MHUW's goal is maintain stable fundraising in each of our key areas to continue to fund the much needed programs and services of our partners and collaborations. Through the workplace giving campaigns over 800 businesses, including many non-profit and governmental organizations, we provide employees the opportunity to make a philanthropic

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contribution through payroll deduction to the MHUW, the Community Impact Initiatives, or other nonprofits of the donor's choice. Volunteer Campaign Managers work within their company and corporate culture to engage all levels of donors. Many companies offer an additional matching gift program to increase the impact of their employee's donation to the programs and services funded by MHUW.

Additional corporate support is generated through specific Initiatives and program contributions and targeted sponsorships for our two community fundraising and awareness events. The annual MHUW Turkey Trot 4-mile race on Thanksgiving Day with over 10,000 runners and the annual Women's Leadership Luncheon attended each year by over 800 women (and some men).

As part of our national United Way best practices, local major donor and volunteer leadership has embraced a number of giving circles and affinity groups to engage, educate and recognize donors and leaders in our community. MHUW's key groups, each with their own volunteer advisory committee are:

Emerging Leaders: An active volunteer and social networking group for up and coming community leaders between 25 and 35.

Women's Leadership: A group led by women contributing more than \$1,000 annually to educate and inspire philanthropy among women across metro Denver with a focus on School Readiness and Youth Success.

Tocqueville Society: Prestigious group of business and community leaders giving over \$10,000 annually to ensure the success of community initiatives.

Legacy Society: Recognizing the generosity of those who have chosen to leave a legacy to our community through estate or deferred gifts.

In the last two years, the MHUW has undertaken a more targeted fundraising strategy of household (\$1-\$500) donors through direct mail, online and social media to engage a larger audience of donors and supporters of our Community Initiatives.

MHUW's goal with private foundation and government grants is to continue to leverage their funding

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to fund core collaborations and partnerships to engage many levels of our community in solving key issues and advancing the common good in our community.

MHUW will support the required matching funds for the Early Literacy SIF through the fundraising of new dollars. While not officially counted toward the match requirement, MHUW will also provide significant in-kind support to this project. As the intermediary, MHUW is also prepared to cover any budget variances that may occur.

Clarification Summary

Program Issues:

Q. Please specify the essential characteristics potential subgrantee applicants must have to be considered for your program. (For example, must the intervention be volunteer-based?)

A. The potential subgrantee applicants of the Mile High United Way Early Literacy Social Innovation Fund will need to have the following essential characteristics to be considered for this program: at least preliminary evidence of programmatic success, service to children in high need communities (as defined below), and capacity to manage federal funds including meeting cash match requirements.

First, applicants will be responsible for demonstrating at least preliminary programmatic success through documentation of tests of evidence either demonstrating change in program participant outcomes through a pre-post test design, or demonstration of positive program effects through more rigorous comparative impact studies such as quasi-experimental designs or random assignment designs. While the minimum requirement will be preliminary evidence of effectiveness, organizations that demonstrate moderate to strong evidence are preferred.

Second, funding will be prioritized for applicants who serve in counties that demonstrate the highest percentage of third grade students reading below proficiency, percentage of students qualifying for free

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or reduced lunch and the percentage of population with income below 200 percent of federal poverty level in the last 12 months.

Additionally, ideal candidates will have demonstrated the successful use of volunteers as part of their overall program strategy. We expect organizations to design capacity building strategies aimed at implementing evidence-based volunteer engagement. Organizations will be asked to provide a strategic plan outlining volunteer training, engagement, recruitment, retention and recognition. However, organizations that demonstrate acceptable levels of evidence and service to high need communities will not be disqualified if they do not have a volunteer infrastructure.

Potential subgrantee applicants must demonstrate the capacity to manage federal funds and demonstrate the ability to meet cash match requirements.

Q. Do you believe that sufficient numbers of potential qualifying programs currently exist in the rural Colorado communities you hope to reach or are you anticipating that groups would coalesce to form new organizations in response to your RFP? Please explain the basis for your answer.

A. Based on initial assessments, there are sufficient numbers of potential qualifying organizations with missions devoted to early childhood literacy in Colorado, in addition to the multitude of schools and organizations that have early childhood programming as part of a larger focus for education.

In conjunction with the Lieutenant Governor's office, Mile High United Way has conducted fact-finding interviews with a sample of 11 literacy-focused nonprofits throughout the state. The findings demonstrated that most organizations currently use volunteers and have at least some systems in place for data metrics. Five of the 11 sample nonprofits are located or have service areas in rural communities.

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In addition to the dozens of literacy nonprofits, Mile High United Way anticipates receiving proposals from school districts around the state in both rural and urban communities.

Q. If such programs currently exist in abundance, why are they not currently having greater impact on Colorado's literacy problem?

A. During the fact-finding interviews with literacy organizations, these nonprofits reported lack of resources as the biggest barrier to delivering high-quality services to large populations. As a result, organizations often serve small focused populations. Resource constraints can also hamper the depth of services provided by organizations targeting larger populations. Those nonprofits that target a broader demographic lack the capacity to be able to deliver the level of service required to generate proficient readers.

Many organizations in the State of Colorado are working on the issue of literacy in isolation or with minimal communication with other organizations. In conjunction with the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Colorado Department of Education, Serve Colorado, Education Leadership Council, regional Early Childhood Councils, and others, Mile High United Way's Early Literacy Social Innovation Fund will help foster better communication among organizations, sharing of best practices, and strategic investment in programs demonstrating at least preliminary evidence of programmatic success.

Q. If new groups would have to be formed, what assurance do you have that these efforts would occur? If they did, on what basis do you anticipate being able to judge the capacity of the organizations to effectively implement a federally-funded subgrant program?

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A. Precedence will be given to organizations that are currently delivering successful early literacy programming and that have demonstrated the ability to manage federal dollars. In the event that a consolidation approach is chosen, the new organization will be required to demonstrate a sound organizational structure including staff with relevant past experience in administering federal award programs, cite specific examples of previous collaborative successes, have the experience or capacity to successfully implement their proposed program (e.g., community support, technical assistance, and monitoring), and have the experience or capacity to successfully develop and implement an evaluation plan. Furthermore they will need to begin operations within six months of the subgrant award.

Q. Also, please explain the type of preliminary evidence you anticipate applying organizations to have? Do you anticipate that they would present data from other organizations' programs they hope to replicate or data from their own programs that they hope to expand or replicate, potentially through the newly formed partnerships discussed in the question above?

A. Mile High United Way anticipates that potential subgrantees will provide evidence specific to their local programs. For those programs implementing a model developed outside Colorado, it is expected that candidates would present the evidence base for that model (that is, documentation of research supporting the efficacy of the model where that testing occurred) and information showing, at a minimum, performance data collected at the Colorado site demonstrating success in implementing the model. At this time, we expect to focus on programs that are currently operating in Colorado with the intention to further evaluate those programs and promote expansion when appropriate.

Mile High United Way is currently aware of programs with evidence bases ranging from preliminary to strong. These programs range from locally developed interventions (e.g., Cañon Literacy Center in Cañon City (rural Fremont County), Summer Scholars in Denver (urban Denver County) to

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implementation of programs developed and tested in other locations and currently implemented in Colorado (e.g., Raising a Reader, Read Well, Peak Reader) to programs operating outside of Colorado (e.g., Experience Corps, Minnesota Reading Corps). The base of evidence for these programs ranges from tracking student literacy gains through a pre-post intervention assessment (with no comparison group), to a randomized trial of students for an after school tutoring program.

Q. Please clarify how many children you are intending to affect in the whole program.

A. According to the figures of some model programs, we can form an initial estimate for the costs of service delivery. For example, based on the budget and client served numbers associated with the Minnesota Reading Corps program, Social Innovation Funds will annually affect 2,000 children across the state with programming designed to improve their literacy skills. The movement of early literacy in the State of Colorado hopes to impact ten thousands of children statewide due to the developing collaborations and partnership. The Social Innovation Fund will be a critical catalyst for social change.

Q. How do you see your specific efforts contributing to the creation of a broader state-wide movement?

A. The foundation for the broader statewide movement has been developed by Mile High United Way working in tandem with the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, State Legislature, the Colorado Department of Education and other community stakeholders. The proposed concept developed through this collaborative effort identifies three key components for achieving sustainable solvency: community conversations, policy action, and civic engagement. In order to foster a statewide culture-shift to successfully impact early childhood literacy, we must accomplish the goals in each of these three components.

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The Mile High United Way Early Literacy Social Innovation Fund would serve as a catalyst for the statewide initiative and formalize the early childhood literacy movement. Mile High United Way will bolster capacity and provide much-needed resources to statewide organizations that currently address critical unmet needs within targeted populations. Resources will be allocated to collect high-quality evidence and evaluate the impact of the project activities to demonstrate our collective effectiveness. Additionally, Mile High United Way will serve as a visible community advocate for early childhood literacy and help engage communities in conversations about early literacy.

Mile High United Way has the experience necessary to develop messaging on a community-wide level about the importance of early literacy, to foster civic engagement/volunteer engagement, devise a statewide communications strategy to affect a culture shift in how literacy is viewed and addressed, and help partners in the effort to build the relationships they need to be successful. Mobilizing the community for social change has been Mile High United Way's specialty for 124 years.

Q. Please explain further the efficacy of using volunteers to tackle this problem. Did you consider other program models such as school-based interventions?

A. As Bob Balfanz, a noted researcher at Johns Hopkins University, said that communities need a "second shift of caring adults" to support children. Children spend 20 percent of their waking hours in school, so extra support has to extend beyond the classroom into after school time, summers and weekends.

Experts say that engaging our children by meeting them where they are, in their own learning style, is critical. Throughout their school careers, connecting them with as many well trained, supportive adults as possible, both in and out of school, can nurture their strengths and ensure help is directed to where it

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is most needed. Reading, tutoring, and mentoring can play an important role in increasing academic success and engagement in learning.

Studies have shown that effectively reading to children requires minimal training and can yield positive results. Minnesota Reading Corps, an AmeriCorps program that provides trained literacy tutors to children ages three to third grade, recruits volunteers who focus on integrating talking, reading and writing into all classroom activities. Others provide supplemental literacy skills tutoring for children in kindergarten to third grade. The Minnesota Reading Corps evaluated 1,600 pre-kindergarten children participating in the program and found that more than half of the participants scoring below average in the fall had scored at or above the target by the spring. Significant numbers of students were shown to make progress in rhyming, letter sound fluency, picture naming, alliteration and letter naming fluency.

The Minnesota Reading Corps is just one of many volunteer programs that have demonstrated success. Other programs demonstrating promise in the use of volunteers to achieve literacy outcomes include Experience Corps, Oregon's Start Making a Reader Today (SMART) program, and Florida's mentoring initiative.

Mile High United Way will focus its efforts on civic engagement as part of the larger overall initiative. There are many additional factors which will augment our efforts, and none is more crucial than our collaboration with the state government of Colorado. Policy action will be required to tackle a number of the issues that cannot be resolved through the use of volunteers alone.

For example, part of the proposed policy efforts is to expand Response to Intervention/Classroom-based technology and to increase the impact of early childhood educators through effective training. These initiatives are aimed to raise awareness and create lasting system-wide change to create a better life for

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Colorado's children.

In addition to school-based interventions, we are exploring interventions that capitalize on networks of centers and family child care homes. Mile High United Way's Early Learning Ventures collaborative is launching Alliances across the State of Colorado. Alliances are community-based, shared services networks of centers and family child care homes working together to strengthen both the quality and sustainability of their programs. Their long-term goal is to blanket the state with 30 regional Alliances, which have the potential to impact over 5,000 small early care and education businesses and serve 180,000 of Colorado's children ages birth to five with parents in the workforce.

Q. You state that you "will select subgrantee organizations throughout the State of Colorado that have the capacity to achieve at least a 25 percent increase in third grade reading proficiency levels by 2016, based on standardized testing in Colorado."

Please clarify whether you mean 25 percent of student program participants will be reading at grade level or whether you intend the organizations to attain a 25 percent increase in overall reading proficiency among the third grade population in the area affected.

A. Mile High United Way's Early Literacy Social Innovation Fund is working in partnership with the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, the Colorado Department of Education and other community stakeholders to ensure that all third graders in the State of Colorado are reading at proficiency levels by third grade. For the purposes of the Social Innovation Fund and the grant period, Mile High United Way has set a benchmark of a 25 percent increase in the number of student participants in programs moving from below proficiency to proficient reading levels. Mile High United Way is currently working to set intermediary benchmarks based on student assessments before third grade to track progress towards

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the 25 percent benchmark.

Q. Your selection process mirrors the process CNCS undertakes for the SIF and you state that you will complete this process within the required six month timeframe. Please clarify the process you intend to implement, briefly describing how you will engage the expert and internal reviewers in this process and provide more information about the timeline you will implement as the process takes place.

Timeline

August 15, 2011 RFP available at www.unitedwaydenver.org

September 6 - 12, 2011 Pre-proposal conferences

October 17, 2011 Proposals due by 5:00 p.m.

October 18, 2011 - January 27, 2012 Seven-step proposal review process

February 1, 2012 Announce awards for subgrantees

March 1, 2012 - February 28, 2013 Annual funding cycle

Mile High United Way will hold pre-proposal conferences at the dates and times listed below.

Attendance at one conference is required from each organization that intends to submit a proposal, or serves as the fiscal manager. The purpose of the conference is to review proposal criteria, answer questions and encourage collaboration.

Tuesday, September 6, 2011, Time: 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Thursday, September 8, 2011, Time: 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Friday, September 9, 2011, Time: 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Monday, September 12, 2011, Time: 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

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Pre-proposal conferences will be held at Mile High United Way as well as in various locations throughout the state to be accessible to all communities in Colorado.

Project selection seven-step process:

1) Compliance Review: Mile High United Way staff will screen applications based on completeness, i.e. compliance with match requirement, deadline, and application components.

2) Initial Eligibility: Mile High United Way staff will review all applications that have passed the compliance review to determine that the proposals demonstrate at least a preliminary evidence level, services provided in low-income and significantly philanthropically underserved communities, and the ability to administer federal funds, and the ability to meet the cash match requirement.

Mile High United Way, with support from its Evaluation Advisory Panel, will develop a rubric to be completed by potential subgrantees in the application process to help determine the level of evidence for the given program. This will include explicit descriptions of studies undertaken on the program, methodology used, analysis undertaken, who completed the study, study results and whether those results were published. Copies of study reports, published or unpublished, will be required as supporting documentation. Based on information and documentation provided, programs will be ranked as not eligible (below a preliminary level of evidence), preliminary, moderate or strong level of evidence by a minimum of two research reviewers.

3) Expert Review: Expert reviewers will assess applications based on the Program Design criteria (25 percent Goals and Objectives; Description of Activities and 25 percent Use of Evidence). Each application will be reviewed by three expert reviewers. Reviewers will be experts in literacy, early childhood education, volunteerism, evaluation and other relevant content experts. All expert reviewers

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will be screened for conflicts of interest or possible impairments to objectivity.

4) Post-Expert Review Quality Control: After the expert reviewers complete their assessments, Mile High United Way staff will review the results based on the application review criteria to determine if any application should receive a quality control assessment if there are significant anomalies in the results from the expert reviewers. Applications that received an external quality control review will have an assessment done of the application's key strengths and weaknesses.

5) Selection of Applications for Internal Review: Upon the completion of the Expert Review, Mile High United Way staff will determine which applications advance to the internal review based on the application review criteria scoring as well as the essential characteristics around at least preliminary evidence of programmatic success, service to children in high-need communities, demonstration/strategic plan to utilize volunteers, and capacity to manage federal funds including meeting cash match requirements.

6) Internal Review: Mile High United Way staff and Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees will assess the Program Design (50 percent); Organizational Capacity (30 percent), and Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy (20 percent) of each proposal. Following staff assessments, some applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information. Site visits and/or interviews may be used as part of this process as the Review Panels deem necessary. Each Review Panel will then comparatively rank the literacy proposals and present finalists to the Mile High United Way Executive Committee and Board of Trustees.

7) Selection: Upon the completion of the Internal Review, final funding recommendations will be made to Mile High United Way's Executive Committee and Board of Trustees for review and final approval.

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Decisions to award funding will be made by Mile High United Way's Board of Trustees in its sole discretion.

Q. In the "Use of Evidence" section, you make several allusions to contracts with evaluators or institutions of higher education that will help with data instruments, data collection, evaluation planning, and validation and implementation studies.

Your application seems to indicate that you will primarily be investing in outcomes measurement which will not be sufficient to move your subgrantees to moderate or strong levels of evidence.

Please clarify how you propose using these contracted partners and the data sources you cite, as well as the evaluators to design and implement rigorous impact evaluations that involve comparison studies.

Who will ultimately be responsible for overseeing this process - Mile High United Way or the subgrantee? What timeframe do you anticipate for evaluations? Also, will evaluation costs be covered by the subgrantee? If so, what percentage of their budget do you anticipate they will spend on evaluation?

A. Subgrantees will be responsible to ensure that rigorous implementation and outcome studies are conducted on their respective programs. Mile High United Way will provide technical assistance to subgrantees to identify appropriate research partners and design rigorous studies. The exact approach used for the different evaluations will be determined once subgrantees are selected and will take into consideration program size, phase of development, current level of evidence supporting the program, research questions and logistics for selecting comparison groups.

Research designs will aim for the highest level of rigor that is methodologically feasible and

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programmatically appropriate. Mile High United Way will work with subgrantees to design studies that will move them from their current level of evidence to the next level, at a minimum. Since all programs will be required to be at a preliminary level of evidence or better in order to be selected as subgrantees, the intent is that all programs will move to a moderate level of evidence, at a minimum, by the end of the initiative.

The RFP process will require that potential subgrantees describe their initial evaluation plans in the application at a high level. Details will include the program logic model, intended research questions, potential research partners and areas needed for technical support. We will also ask about research and evaluation experience and demonstrated capacity and interest in engaging in research and evaluation. Mile High United Way realizes that the capacity for evaluative thinking and planning varies greatly across nonprofits and will take this into consideration in the review process. The intention is to determine where individual subgrantee or group technical assistance is needed in the area of evaluation planning, implementation, and performance improvement and provide support through planned and ad hoc sessions both remotely and in person.

Identification of program evaluators/researchers and finalization of evaluation design will occur within eight months of the distribution of funds. The length of the program evaluation will depend on the size of the program (and therefore how quickly the necessary number of children can be enrolled in the program given the study design) and the length of the program intervention (allowing time for the intervention to occur and for clients to achieve outcomes). While subgrantees are responsible to ensure evaluation designs are complete and implemented, Mile High United Way will monitor progress and work with subgrantees to support them in this process, share learning and overcome barriers.

Mile High United Way is working with the Colorado Department of Education to determine where we

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can collaborate on statewide systems for data collection and student assessment in order to support the outcome measurement in literacy for this initiative. This will support the acquisition of student assessment data for subgrantees.

Third-party evaluators will conduct subgrantee level evaluations with support from Mile High United Way in identifying evaluators, as needed, and in refining evaluation focus and design. A third-party research approach is most feasible from a capacity standpoint as Mile High United Way does not have the capacity to conduct evaluations for each subgrantee. Additionally, third party evaluators carry a level of independence that Mile High United Way staff would not hold.

Mile High United Way will require that a portion of sub-granted funds be applied to these research studies, with an additional set of matching funds being supplied by the subgrantee. Evaluation budget will be dependent on the type of evaluation intended and Mile High United Way staff will review the evaluation budget for appropriateness. A minimum of 15 percent of the program budget should be allocated to evaluation activities for quasi-experimental designs, 20 percent for experimental designs with considerable rigor needed, and 25 percent for those research designs employing random assignment. These percentages will be used as guidance for subgrantees and they will be encouraged in the application process to consult with research experts on both study design and budget. Mile High United Way will provide informational sessions on evaluation during the application process as well.

Q. Under technical assistance you cite that you will conduct site visits, calls and convene grantees to encourage knowledge sharing. You also site that you will contract with other United Ways, local universities or the Colorado Nonprofit Association to provide capacity building trainings. Please clarify your plan for these activities and your anticipated budget costs for these trainings. There does not appear to be money budgeted for them.

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A. Mile High United Way will plug into the Colorado nonprofit community's existing infrastructure facilitating technical assistance and knowledge-sharing. We have denoted staff time in the budget for the evaluation teams to travel to each program site for management and technical assistance purposes.

The program officer, in conjunction with the evaluation teams, will ensure that program replication is feasible and highlight appropriate steps for expansion and capacity building.

Monthly conference calls will be held with program managers at a regularly scheduled time. Agendas will be issued at least two days in advance so that subgrantees and others may participate. All subgrantees will be required to participate in a minimum of one call each quarter. Notes will be sent out to all subgrantees following the calls. If best practices are highlighted on the call, a separate notice will be issued with an attachment so that subgrantees can easily track best practices.

Once a year, Mile High United Way will convene the subgrantee managers for an in-person meeting for training on relevant topics such as updated Corporation for National and Community Service guidance, evidence-based capacity building activities, and performance measures development. All the programs can network, brainstorm, share best practices, and convene as a collective group.

Subgrantees will have a standing invitation to request individual training and technical assistance, which can be provided at any time via email, phone or on-site visits, as appropriate.

Q. You indicate that the program officer, who is to be hired, will be responsible for training and technical assistance. Please clarify and explain how you will take steps to ensure the hired program officer has the skills and experience necessary to manage this essential part of the program.

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A. The Senior Director at Mile High United Way will oversee the program officer and ensure that this person has the skills necessary to effectively administer this complex process. The Senior Director has culled other program officer job descriptions and talked to evidence-based literacy programs to ensure the job description has the necessary details to garner the best-fit individual for this job.

The program officer will oversee the management of all subgrantees--an estimated ten to fifteen subgrantees that could consist of schools, after-school, faith-based, library, early childhood councils, or other literacy programs; provide supervision to site staff and subcontractors; provide technical assistance resources; and create a continual system of quality improvement feedback with United Way staff, program site staff, and site coordinators.

This individual will oversee trainings in all components of balanced literacy and in reading assessment administration procedures in cooperation with site staff and literacy coaches; schedule and plan (and sometimes conduct) monthly workshops based on specific content-area or specific needs; work with subgrantees and literacy coaches to develop curriculum or training workshops as needed; work with Mile High United Way staff and site staff to ensure timely collection of program data; complete grant-reporting procedures, budgeting requirements, report writing and grant writing (when necessary); work with subgrantees to develop communication tools (e.g. websites, newsletters, etc); and manage data collection systems.

Q. Please clarify your plans for evaluation at the portfolio level and the budget you anticipate to cover these plans. Your application indicates that you will seek partnerships to assist with evaluation but your budget does not reflect costs for these partnerships.

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A. Portfolio-level evaluation will focus on the assessing the overall level of reach, fidelity of implementation, fidelity of assessment administration, and student outcomes. Ultimately, we want to know whether programs are being implemented as expected, and whether student outcomes are meeting expectations. Intermediate outcomes goals for early literacy prior to third grade will be set to help guide initiative efforts. Mile High United Way has been in discussions with the Colorado Department of Education regarding these early grade assessments

Mile High United Way is currently in conversation with the Colorado Department of Education to coordinate initiative and student assessment efforts. Mile High United Way intends to align with the state approach to assessment, and to capitalize on and partner with the state on the use of existing and planned data systems for use in evaluating student progress.

Additionally, Mile High United Way intends to investigate other factors likely to impact the quality of implementation, most specifically community process quality and parent engagement and how these impact the implementation of the programs and the student outcomes. To that extent, certain measures and data collection will be required of all subgrantees for use in the portfolio level evaluation.

The budget reflects \$100,000 annually for evaluation. Mile High United Way will augment that with additional funds as needed once further refinement of evaluation plans occurs.

Q. While you indicate staff members who have experience with federal grants and allude to your experience managing federal funds, you do not provide specific information on how you will ensure subgrantees are trained and supported in managing federal funds. Please clarify your plans for this.

A. The Mile High United Way Early Literacy Social Innovation Fund grant award documents will

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contain language informing subgrantees that they are receiving federal funds and indicate the funding agency, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number, and the requirements to have an audit conducted in accordance with the Single Audit Act.

When grants are awarded to the subgrantees, Mile High United Way will hold a kick-off meeting that will include a discussion of grant requirements and provide information on relevant federal rules and regulations that the subgrantees are required to follow. Mile High United Way will monitor subgrantees activities and documentation throughout the program period via monthly reporting and monthly contact. When appropriate, on-site visits will be performed.

Budget Issues for Clarification

Please answer the following questions in your clarifications narrative or make the changes requested below directly in the application budget section in eGrants.

Q. Please ensure your budget provides for travel to two SIF-related meetings in Washington D.C.

A. These costs are included in Section C (Travel) of the budget request.

Q. Under the Kennedy Serve America Act, all grantee and subgrantee staff included on the budget and funded under the grant (whether budgeted from Federal funds or matching funds) must go through a criminal history check as described in the Corporation's regulations at 45 CFR 2540.200. Please revise your budget to cover those costs. Costs for background checks vary significantly state by state. For information on national service criminal history checks, including Frequently Asked Questions with a list of designated state agencies who can advise you about costs for obtaining criminal history information from them, go to <http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/criminal-history>.

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A. The budget has been modified to include the costs of such criminal history checks, and this cost will be 100 percent paid by Mile High United Way. The budget only includes criminal history checks for Mile High United Way staff; the cost of such checks for subgrantees will be a required part of their budget.

Q. Supplies-Phone/fax/data-line item does not equal the calculation please revise.

A. We corrected the typo in the narrative. The "4" in 4100 should have been a "\$".

Q. Contractual and Consultant-Please provide more detail on the software and customization line item. If a contract to a service provider please include some detail.

A. We anticipate the need for portfolio-wide data collection and are in conversation with the Colorado Department of Education to determine where collaboration is possible in this area. This line item will support those system efforts.

We will acquire a shared platform of communication and need logins for each subgrantee to capture and/or amend data. We will need licensures for this centralized system and underscore the need to the hours needed for the evaluation team to be able to effectively retrieve and aggregate the data to monitor output.

Q. Contractual/Consultant-Is the property management line a customary charge for all programs of the organization? Provide more detail on including the building repair and maintenance and the other services included here.

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A. The property management line is a customary charge for all programs, consisting of the direct costs of maintaining and operating the facilities at Mile High United Way. Aspects of building upkeep are contracted out to a third party property management firm and we are billed monthly for these services. Such costs are then allocated to departments based on square footage and further allocated to the SIF program based on FTE assigned.

Q. Contractual/Consultant-Human Resources contract services-Are these services that are provided for all employees in the organization? Please describe the professional organizations charge included in this line.

A. The Human Resources department supports all employees in the organization and the total cost is allocated to departments/programs on a "per FTE" basis. Professional organizations fees are paid to Mountain States Employers Council (MSEC) who provides Mile High United Way with a one-stop shopping resource for human resources management, employment law, surveys and training. MSEC provides Mile High United Way with consultation, direct assistance and representation in human resource and employment law issues. Mile High United Way does not have a federally-approved indirect cost rate.

Q. Criminal History checks do not appear on the budget. All persons listed in the personnel section will need criminal history checks to comply with the regulations.

A. The budget has been modified to include the costs of such criminal history checks, and this cost will be 100 percent paid by Mile High United Way. The budget includes criminal history checks for Mile High United Way staff; the cost of such checks for subgrantees will be part of their budget.

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Q. Please provide the most recent audited financial statements.

A. The most recent audited financial statements have been submitted to Corporation for National and Community Service via email given the character limitations in this document.

Additional Clarification Questions:

Q. Please clarify how you envision the SIF investments in your selected grantees would actually generate incremental impact. Do you anticipate that existing programs will be expanded to reach incrementally more youth as a result of their subaward? Or do you anticipate that the level of impact (i.e. outcomes) will improve as a result of the technical assistance they will receive? Or is it a combination of the two? If you can provide examples of anticipated increased program impact (i.e. increased numbers or increased quality of literacy outcomes) based on your fact-finding interviews, please include them.

A. Mile High United Way envisions the SIF investment generating incremental impact on literacy rates by focusing on subgrantees seeking to expand the number of children served and potentially the geographic scope of services.

Existing programs will expand to reach incrementally more youth as a result of the SIF investment and the technical assistance that will be provided.

The SIF investments will provide subgrantees the resources required to hire additional staff to support increased number of students to be served, to increase the sophistication of evaluations to measure programmatic success, and to make modifications as necessary to improve quality and service delivery of existing programs.

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During fact-finding interviews, a number of organizations were identified that demonstrate at least preliminary levels of evidence and the infrastructure and capacity to expand. When discussing hypothetical expansion in program scope and quality of outcomes, organizations self-identified limited resources for program implementation as the largest barrier to expansion, e.g. having the funds to hire a site coordinator to recruit students and volunteers into the already-successful curriculum. One organization interviewed is currently serving both urban and rural communities and with additional funding would be able to expand into another rural area.

It is also critical that organizations adhere to implementation best practices as the programs expand to serve more children. The SIF investments will allow subgrantees to serve more children and potentially new populations while ensuring that programs are maintaining or improving quality.

A key objective of Mile High United Way's Social Innovation Fund application is to increase quality programs that enhance outcomes for literacy. Mile High United Way will provide technical assistance to subgrantees to increase the quality, dosage levels of service, evidence levels, and/or the ability to work with new populations such as children with disabilities, English learners, and their families.

Q. Please clarify if you anticipate that subgrantees in existing rural communities can expand their impact in terms of number of youth served. Will their program growth be constricted by geography?

A. Mile High United Way anticipates that subgrantees in existing rural communities can expand their impact in terms of number of youth served. There is a potential that program growth may be constricted by geography; however, the larger statewide initiative is designed to bring together new ways of collaboration to transcend geographic boundaries. Given the physical layout of Colorado, programs currently serving in more urban communities are often in close proximity to rural communities and may

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be able to expand programs into these rural areas. Additionally, rural communities can come together to share best practices and curricula with other organizations in surrounding rural communities. The extensive network of organizations and stakeholders involved in the statewide literacy plan will help facilitate these collaborative efforts.

Q. You cite an estimate of 2,000 youth served based on the Minnesota Reading Corps program. Can you please explain what this number represents (e.g. is it incremental students reached and if so on what base?), how you got to this estimate and why it is a comparable number to your anticipated program?

A. The estimation of 2,000 youth served each year through SIF investments represents an annual increase of students served through the expansion of subgrantee programs.

In order to get a strong estimation for the number of new youth served each year, Mile High United Way first looked to the Minnesota Reading Corps because this program is an established, evidence-based program that utilizes volunteers and thus represents perhaps the most relevant large-scale early childhood literacy initiative from which deductive estimations can be made.

Given the overall programmatic costs measured and the number of children served, the Minnesota Reading Corps predicts that \$17 million in federal funds makes it possible to reach 15,000 children. The cost per child served is about \$1,133 dollars. The cost ratio of \$1,333 per child served provides a baseline for successful literacy interventions.

Given that Mile High United Way's SIF investments will not fund one specific program benefiting from the cost savings associated with large-scale programs, Mile High United Way estimated that the cost per student would be higher given the different types of services and their associated costs, the size of

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agencies receiving funds, and the costs associated with training and technical assistance. A cost ratio of approximately \$2,000 per child was developed.

Estimated SIF investment: \$1,814,706

80% of the SIF investments allocated to subgrantees: \$1,451,765

Mile High United Way 1:1 match: \$1,451,765

Subgrantee 1:1 match: \$1,451,765

Total amount resulting from SIF and matching funds per year: \$4,355,295

Thus, if the total SIF-leveraged funds (\$4,355,295) are divided by the anticipated cost per student (\$2,000), the estimated yield is 2,177 children served. To err on the conservative side, Mile High United Way felt confident in estimating that 2,000 new youth will be served per year.

Q. If there is an existing document that outlines the state-wide strategic plan to address literacy and associated strategic goals or outcomes in terms of community conversations, policy action, and civic engagement, please email us a copy or website link.

A. There is an existing literacy action plan that outlines the statewide strategic plan addressing literacy and associated strategic goals for community conversations, policy action and civic engagement. At this stage, the document is a framework that will have specific outcomes added within the next several months. This document has been confidentially submitted via email to the Corporation for National and Community Service since this is not yet a finalized public document.

Continuation Changes

N/A

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Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Match Verification

Sent

**2011 Social Innovation Fund
Mile High United Way
Section 2 – Budget**

on August 15, 2011 10:07 AM

Mile High United Way Early Literacy Social Innovation Fund**Mile High United Way**

Application ID: 11SI127773

Budget Dates: 09/01/2011 - 08/31/2016

	Total Amt	CNCS Share	Grantee Share
Section I. Program Costs			
A. Project Personnel Expenses	660,500	503,500	157,000
B. Personnel Fringe Benefits	84,713	65,547	19,166
FICA	24,921	19,821	5,100
Health Insurance	30,476	22,407	8,069
Retirement	19,545	15,546	3,999
Life Insurance	3,257	2,591	666
Total	\$162,912	\$125,912	\$37,000
C. Travel	14,600	0	14,600
D. Equipment			
E. Supplies	43,488	0	43,488
F. Contractual and Consultant Services	368,600	0	368,600
H. Other Costs	3,010,940	1,500,000	1,510,940
Subgrants	3,000,000	1,500,000	1,500,000
Total	\$6,010,940	\$3,000,000	\$3,010,940
Section I. Subtotal	\$7,261,040	\$3,629,412	\$3,631,628
Section II. Indirect Costs			
J. Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate			
Indirect Costs	0	0	0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0
Section II. Subtotal	\$0	\$0	\$0
Budget Totals	\$7,261,040	\$3,629,412	\$3,631,628
Funding Percentages		50%	50%
Required Match		n/a	
# of years Receiving CNCS Funds		n/a	