

# PART I - FACE SHEET

## APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to confirm to the Corporation's eGrants System)

1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION:

Application  Non-Construction

2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):

3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:

16-JAN-12

STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:

n/a

2b. APPLICATION ID:

12AC133345

4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:

FEDERAL IDENTIFIER:

12ACHOK0010001

### 5. APPLICATION INFORMATION

LEGAL NAME: Jennings Public School

DUNS NUMBER: 100451178

ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county):

600 North Oak  
Jennings OK 74038 - 5200  
County: Pawnee

NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes):

NAME: Susan Cargill  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: (918) 757-2536 26  
FAX NUMBER: (918) 757-2338  
INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: scargill@jennings.k12.ok.us

6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN):

731137401

7. TYPE OF APPLICANT:

7a. State Education Agency

7b.

8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box).

NEW                       NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTE  
 CONTINUATION         AMENDMENT

If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es):

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:94.006

10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps State

11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT:

Lead to Read (Successful Service)

12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc):

Creek OK, Osage OK, Logan OK, Pawnee OK, Okfuskee OK, Noble OK, Payne OK, Okmulgee OK

11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):

13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 09/01/12    END DATE: 08/31/15

14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant  b.Program

15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #:

a. FEDERAL	\$ 266,001.00
b. APPLICANT	\$ 120,000.00
c. STATE	\$ 0.00
d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00
<b>g. TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 386,001.00</b>

16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?

YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON:

DATE:

NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372

17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT?

YES if "Yes," attach an explanation.     NO

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:

Chris Ballenger

b. TITLE:

Superintendent

c. TELEPHONE NUMBER:

(918) 757-2536

d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:

e. DATE SIGNED:

12/08/11

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Forty half-time (HT) AmeriCorps members will provide one-on-one and small group literacy instruction in 17 elementary schools in 17 school districts located in eight rural and remote counties. Members will use evidence based reading strategies to improve academic performance in literacy to underachieving students in poverty, grades pre-k through 3rd. Each member will also leverage a minimum of 10 volunteers, including their students and community residents, to participate in school-based service projects. At the end of each year, 75% of students who completed the program will have reached grade level benchmarks in literacy. This project will focus on CNCS focus area of Education. The CNCS investment of \$266,001 will be matched with \$103,051.

## Rationale and Approach

### I. RATIONALE AND APPROACH/PROGRAM DESIGN

#### A. NEED

Districts where Lead to Read (L2R) members will serve are from a wide-spread region in rural Northeastern Oklahoma that is sparsely populated and has very limited resources. This region includes 17 separate school districts, each of which includes only 1 elementary school: Allen Bowden, Anderson, Barnsdall, Cleveland, Crescent, Depew, Drumright, Hominy, Jennings, Lonestar, Mannford, Mason, Morrison, Pawnee, Prettywater, Ripley, and Wilson. The members serving in these districts provide services in eight counties: Creek, Osage, Logan, Pawnee, Okfuskee, Noble, Payne, and Okmulgee. According to the 2010 School District Report Card, 15 of the 17 member districts are below the state average in population. The largest population is 9,233 and the smallest population is 846. Many of the schools where members will serve are located in communities rather than towns and as such have very few resources. To paint a picture, most have only small convenience stores where the community may purchase fuel and limited grocery items such as milk and bread and several don't even have a post office or even a small business. People in these communities drive a minimum of 30 minutes to purchase basic staples, receive medical care, and access basic services such as a library. Because of the community sizes and scarce resources and assets of these particular counties, there is little opportunity for gainful employment unless one travels 30-45 minutes to Tulsa or Stillwater to work. Of the 17 sites, 7 are above the state average for unemployment and 4 are equal to the state average. The remaining 6 sites are within 2% points of the state average.

According to the 2010 socioeconomic data from each district, 15 of the schools at which members will serve have a higher percentage of students on free/reduced lunch than the state average of 58%. Of those 15 districts, the percentage ranges from 61.3% of students eligible for free and reduced lunch to

## Narratives

87% of students eligible for free and reduced lunch (2010 School Report Cards). The remaining 2 districts have a percentage of 54 and 51.

A majority of the students that attend these 17 school districts are Caucasian or Native American. The average breakdown includes 63% Caucasian, 2% Black, 1% Asian, 2% Hispanic, and 33% Native American. Specifically, the Native American population ranges from 17% to 61% of the student population.

Statewide, the percentage of students in grades 3rd through 6th that score satisfactory and above on school reading assessments are 74% in 3rd grade, 69% in 4th grade, 70% in 5th grade, and 68% in 6th grade. The picture for the targeted students in grades 3rd through 6th is much different. For most of the schools, the trend appears to be that the percentage of students who score satisfactory and above on their reading assessments goes down after 3rd grade. On average, 68% of students score satisfactory and above on their reading assessments in 3rd grade, 66% in 4th grade and 58% in 5th grade with a slight increase in 6th grade. Six of them in 3rd grade have a score of 60% or below, 7 of them in 4th grade have a score of 60% or below, and 10 of them in 5th grade have a score of 60% or below. All Oklahoma elementary schools are assessed on specific benchmarks for reading and math. For our 17 schools, 6 did not meet their benchmarks in any of the grades 3rd through 6th, 4 did not meet their benchmarks in 3 of the grades 3rd through 6th, 3 did not meet their benchmarks in 2 of the grades 3rd through 6th and 2 did not meet their benchmarks in 1 of the grades 3rd through 6th. Finally, the education level of our 17 districts is fairly low. Of the 17 districts, at least 75% of adults 25 years of age and older have less than a college degree. For 4 of our districts, at least 90% of adults 25 years of age and older have less than a college degree. And for 11 of our districts, at least 80% of adults 25 years of age and older have less than a college degree.

Within the small rural areas and schools, our students lack the resources they need to be successful in school, fall short of their grade level in literacy, and face increased challenges based on the income and education levels of their families. And because of the lack of resources our towns face, the school then becomes the focal point for all services to the child.

L2R members will provide the 17 member districts with AmeriCorps members who will serve in the elementary school systems on a daily basis to provide one-on-one and small group literacy intervention before and after school to children in grades pre-k through 3rd. A number of systematic reviews have been conducted in the area of one-on-one support and the evidence consistently demonstrates the effectiveness of such interventions in improving a variety of reading and academic outcomes (Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes & Watson Moody 2000; Ritter, Barnett, Denny & Albin 2009; Slavin, Lake, Davis & Madden 2009). The main findings to emerge from these reviews are that one-on-one reading interventions aimed at children at risk of reading failure significantly increase children's reading skills.

## Narratives

Specifically, listening comprehension decoding, oral reading and fluency and reading comprehension similar to the ones L2R members provide their assigned students. With prevention and early intervention, experts have found reading failure in the primary grades can be reduced to less than 1 in 10 children (Vellutino et al., 1996 Torgeson et al., 1997; Foorman et al., 1998).

### B. VALUE ADDED: AMERICORPS MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Forty HT members will be placed in 17 elementary schools/school districts located in 8 counties. L2R members will provide the 17 member districts with AmeriCorps members who will serve in the school systems on a daily basis to provide them with one-on-one and small group literacy intervention during school hours for students pre-k through 3rd grade. Members will serve from September 1 through May 31, serving each day from 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM.

At the beginning of the year, teachers will assess students using one of the following evidence based assessments: DIBELS, Literacy First, BEARS, or STAR dependent upon the district they are in and the approved district assessment. Members, in collaboration with teachers and principals, will review the scores and group students according to assessment results. Based upon the results, the members will be assigned a core focus group of students for which they will provide one-on-one and small group intervention. Each member will work with a core group of focus students from 3 -- 4 different grade levels, meaning that each member will have 3 -- 4 focus groups that they work with on a daily basis, with an average of 4 - 5 students per group. On average, members will maintain a caseload of 15 -- 20 students.

Each member will support his or her students in small group or one-on-one intervention, which will typically last for 45 minutes at a time. The member will collaborate with their assigned teacher on each grade level for which they have an assigned focus group of students to both plan the daily and weekly schedule and evidence based activities for the core group using the district adopted core curriculum (i.e. Scott Foresman) and strategies learned in member orientation and training.

Within our small rural areas, schools lack the ability to provide certain resources for student success including high quality tutors that can provide one-on-one and small group instruction. The L2R program recruits members from our communities that have the potential to be great tutors, but lack the training to do the specific literacy instruction. We have a rich pool of potential candidates from our communities, many of which have the abilities, but lack opportunity to demonstrate their abilities because of the limited employment opportunities in our town and the major distance to other opportunities because of our rural locations. Through the training and support our program and schools provide, our members not only have the increased ability to support our young students in literacy attainment, but also enhance their education and skills for future employment opportunities.

### C. EVIDENCE-BASED

## Narratives

Because of the wide-spread rural region our program serves, we are placing members in 17 distinct school districts for which each district only has 1 elementary school. And each district has their own district-adopted literacy curriculum that they require their schools to use, each of which follows state standards, incorporates research based literacy practices, and adopts evidence based interventions. An example of one of the district-adopted curriculums is Scott Foresman. In this particular curriculum, each lesson focuses on Common Core State Standards, moving children toward higher-order thinking and incorporating a comprehensive instructional scope and sequence. Reading skills and strategy instruction are explicit, based on individual assessed needs, and systematically designed to lead students to reading independence. The literacy scope areas that each district approved curriculum teach include concepts of print and print awareness; phonological and phonemic awareness; Phonics, Decoding, and Word Recognition; Vocabulary and Concept Development; Reading Comprehension; and Literary Analysis, Response, Appreciation, and Fluency. And within each scope area, there are a series of activities that are sequenced to ensure students acquire the skills needed to master each literacy level. For example, within concepts of print and print awareness, examples of activities include: holds book right side up, turns pages correctly, moved from front to back of book, etc. And each age group requires different activity sequences within each scope area that allow the student to get to his or her appropriate grade level.

### D. MEMBER EXPERIENCE

The L2R (L2R) AmeriCorps program places a great emphasis on the member service experience, incorporating year long reflection activities and providing members with opportunities to experience community and civic opportunities, along with connecting them on a regular basis to AmeriCorps and national service.

Reflection is incorporated throughout the year in a few different ways. First, members are required to write 4 reflections a year in their reflection log in OnCorps. With each quarterly reflection opportunity, questions are posed that allow members to think about topics of importance as it relates to education, service, or leadership. First, we typically ask members to think about what has been happening in their last quarter of service (called the "what" question) as it relates to their students and their families, their schools, and themselves. Second, we ask members to explore the "so what" question to have them focus on the implications of what is happening and to seek understanding of what is happening or not happening. Third, we ask members to explore the "now what" questions to have them think about next steps they can take in this year and beyond to make even greater change in themselves, their students, schools and communities. Members then submit their reflections to the Program Director so she can monitor member experiences and respond individually and as a group with further supervision and training.

## Narratives

Throughout the year, we also encourage members to play a role in the life of their community, typically through avenues that have some relationship to their school service. One activity that has had past success includes our requirement for members to attend and write a reflection at a minimum of one school board and one civic meeting during their year of service. Members have learned a great deal about the board and/or council process, for many of which this was their first experience participating in such an activity. Members also set up information booths during parent/teacher conferences, which allows them to talk with school staff and family members about the AmeriCorps program, what they are doing in their year of service and connect with student families so they can speak specifically about individual progress and future areas of support required.

The connection to AmeriCorps and national service is also emphasized throughout the year through both informal and formal strategies. First, members are required to wear an AmeriCorps name badge every day while on site. This daily awareness creates a reminder for members that they are AmeriCorps members and educates school staff and families about the role AmeriCorps plays in school and student success. Members are also provided AmeriCorps gear to wear while serving, encouraging them to wear their shirts at least one time per week. Each site is also provided AmeriCorps posters and emblems for the door that promote AmeriCorps presence. As a part of the Memorandum of Understanding with each site, they each commit to posting these materials somewhere on the school campus, visible to others. And to kick off member understanding of their year of service and what it is to be an AmeriCorps member, all members participate in the annual Swearing in Ceremony with all stakeholders participating. The Oklahoma Community Service Commission administers the AmeriCorps Pledge and talks to the members about their role in the state and the nation.

We also allow our members to showcase their year of service to those who are interested in being future members. People interested in the AmeriCorps program will shadow an AmeriCorps member for a day, while the member shares their AmeriCorps experience. This allows our members the opportunity to practice talking about AmeriCorps, their year, and the effect it has had on themselves, their students and the larger community. Members are also required to complete a "Spread the Word" form to send a message to at least 5 people about what they are doing and their impact. This message can be sent to family members, friends, area stakeholders, or families of the students they serve.

Our specific AmeriCorps program is in a very remote and rural region of the state with no area AmeriCorps programs nearby. However, we continue to work on ways we can ensure ongoing communication with both fellow L2R members and members from other programs. At orientation, we provide opportunities for members to get to know one another, building relationships that will support future interest in staying in touch. We also share contact information and set up a program Facebook page where members can regularly communicate. And during the Swearing in Ceremony, the

## **Narratives**

commission talks to members about the other programs throughout the state, the national service movement, and the impact individuals are having across the state and nation. Towards the end of the year, we encourage all members to join AmeriCorps alums and identify ways in which they can continue their service in their community and beyond. We are also talking about how we can start an alumni chapter to keep our members connected and bring them together for service opportunities that support our communities.

### **E. OVERALL PICTURE**

Based on the data detailed in the need section and collaboration with each of our superintendents in schools, the evidence and expressed need show that there are many students who live at or near the poverty line who are either behind or falling behind their grade level literacy goals. The School data we shared earlier from the 2010 School Report Cards clearly shows that as students progress through the elementary grades, their assessment scores drop, many of whom score regularly at below satisfactory. And consistently, the elementary schools our members serve, in our very remote area of Oklahoma, are not meeting their required benchmarks for reading. This combination demonstrates that members are needed to support both the students in literacy and the schools in performance requirements so our area young people can achieve school success and have options for post high school beyond just getting a job. As such, and based on research that shows what works, we are matching 40 half time AmeriCorps members with 3 -- 4 core groups of 4 -- 5 focus students each on varied elementary school grade levels, pre-k to 3rd grade, to support one-on-one and small group literacy instruction and activities. In addition, we are incorporating a volunteer generation piece that will require members to recruit at least 10 volunteers each to engage in school service projects so that students, their families, and other community members can have opportunities to be engaged in the life of their school, for many towns; the center of their community. And as a result of the members, 500 students will complete the program and 75% of those students will benchmark at their grade level (scoring satisfactory or above). In addition, 400 volunteers will play a one-time or ongoing role in 1 or more service projects that will benefit the elementary school, the center of all of our communities.

### **F. AMERICORPS MEMBER SELECTION, TRAINING, AND SUPERVISION**

Outreach and member recruitment happens in a diversity of ways. Prior to the start up of our program, we advertise the member opportunities in all of our local newspapers that go out to the various 8 county regions. L2R also contacts area Universities and Colleges, posts program materials, and finds opportunities to speak at various student forums to recruit college students and/or graduates. The primary universities and colleges we work with are Oklahoma State University, Tulsa Community College, and Northeastern Oklahoma State University Broken Arrow.

And because of our strong program and ways that we showcase the AmeriCorps program, the L2R

## Narratives

program is contacted weekly by people who are interested in serving their community. Through the varied activities we mentioned in the "Member Experience" section where members attend and participate in various school and community events, shadow interested individuals, and spread the word about their service, they are constantly visible in the communities in which they serve which provides constant outreach and awareness in our community. In addition, our sites are big champions of our program and are constantly connecting people to our program who would benefit from earning an education award while serving the community and would be a good match for our AmeriCorps program. Our school sites regularly send information home in student's folders that also help to raise awareness about our program. As a result of the community outreach and awareness activities we do and the limited job opportunities in our areas, a majority of our applicants come directly from our community, although we have had a few come through the national website.

To select the members who serve in our program, we have a two-part process. First, the Superintendent at each site interviews individuals interested in AmeriCorps. Any candidate(s) the superintendents think are going to be a viable member are sent to the L2R Program Director, who asks them to complete an application and sets up a time to do a second interview. Each superintendent, as detailed in the written Memorandums of Agreement, is responsible for selecting at least 2 potential applicants depending on number of members placed at each school. Using a rubric, applicants are scored on various areas such as communication, adaptability, time management, planning and organization, and decision making to name a few. Finally, in making the ultimate selection of our 40 HT members, the Program Director looks for individuals who have the potential to cause a "ripple effect" -- a larger influence not only on the schools, but also on the larger community -- ones that will take risks in the year in various leadership roles and use this year of opportunities as a foundation for larger involvement when their service term ends.

Our member training plan begins before members start their year. Prior to orientation, each member takes a Learning Styles Inventory. At orientation, they receive and learn about their own learning styles and participate in activities and training that help them understand what that means for their individual success and how they work best with others. Members learn that everyone has a different style in which they learn therefore understanding that every student they work with will also learn in a different style. The L2R orientation lasts four days and happens the first week of September. Our Orientation includes topics such as AmeriCorps 101, understanding our communities and schools, basic rules and regulations members must adhere to, and other program required information. Members are also given the opportunity to become familiar with their site and meet the faculty and staff and get a feel for how their individual sites operate. A bulk of the 4 days, however, is spent on training that supports the members in their position specific duties. The literacy curriculum we use covers Evidence Based Strategies from: 5

## Narratives

Big Ideas in Reading, Battling Boredom Strategies, Considering Reluctant Readers, Strategies to Engage Reluctant Readers, and Super Speed Strategies. And at orientation, we begin to expose members to career and education opportunities in our area.

Specifically as it relates to member literacy activities, members are given a model of a tutoring session from the book "Training the Reading Team: A Guide for Supervisors of a Volunteer Tutoring Program" in which they are to model all of their tutoring sessions after. The six elements to a tutoring session are as follows: 1) Read Old Favorites (familiar text) -- for 5 minutes, tutors should begin each session by reading books we call "old favorites" which are books the child is familiar with and has read before. We recommend rereading at least two old favorites at the beginning of the session; 2) Read together -- for 5-10 minutes, the tutor and child read a new book. They select something new to read, and discuss what might happen by looking at the pictures and thinking about what they already know. As the child reads the book aloud, the member stops to discuss what is happening and what might happen next; 3) Write together -- For 5 minutes, the child and member write together. By doing this, the member can demonstrate how students can put their ideas in writing. Both the member and student can write in their journals or can write to each other to create a written dialog; 4) Read for enjoyment -- For 5 minutes, members have the child choose his or her own book for silent reading; 5) Talk about words -- For 5 minutes, the members discuss words that help the child to notice characteristics or patterns in words when reading. Members talk about beginning letters, rhyming words, and introduce a strategy for struggling readers such as Super Speed Reading, Story Mapping, or Fluency; 6) Summarize Success -- For 5 minutes, members summarize student success by helping children talk about what they did well during the tutoring session.

Ongoing training happens throughout the year in both formal, large group in-person settings and school based opportunities as the Program Director visits and monitors each school and communicates with members through bi-weekly correspondence and as assigned teachers work with their members to carry out the school approved curriculum. The main purpose of each training strategy is to increase member comprehension of effective and age appropriate literacy interventions and ultimately to improve the reading rate and level of their core group of students. Each school is required to train and support their assigned members on the school approved literacy curriculum. At the beginning of each year, members work with their assigned teachers and the superintendent to familiarize themselves with the curriculum and its activities and to use the individual student assessments as a starting point from which they provide specific intervention.

The training conducted during formal, monthly site visits addresses the concerns that the members have for the struggling readers they are tutoring. After each site visit, the Program Director, who is also a reading specialist, writes an individual literacy "prescription" that suggests strategies members can

## Narratives

implement to help readers she observed during a tutoring session.

Throughout the year, the Program Director also spends time identifying individual member skill sets, great ideas, and talents and allows them the opportunity throughout the year to showcase that to their fellow members. This is one opportunity of many that the program provides its members an opportunity to serve in leadership roles.

As a culminating experience, members will meet at Central Technology Center in Drumright, Oklahoma. The Program Director will lead discussions about the data that the members gathered and present to them the impact that their year of service had on the students and schools. Members will be recognized with a certificate for service and given an opportunity to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the program and to reflect on their member experience. The information we gather from this event will be considered in the planning of the next year. This closing ceremony will serve to recognize our members and school staff that played a great role in the success of our program, encourages our stakeholders to reflect on their year and what that means for next steps for the program and individuals, and celebrate all that we have done and experienced in this year.

Our AmeriCorps members are supervised using a 2-pronged strategy. The first strategy occurs on the school level. First, our members are supervised daily by the site supervisor, one of their assigned teachers. This daily supervision includes a check-in at some point in the day. Members will meet formally with their site supervisors once a week to discuss the progress of the students they are tutoring and to discuss any changes needed that would benefit the student or member. And mid and end of term, each member is provided a formal evaluation to assess their performance and progress to date. In addition, each member is provided with an assigned teacher for each grade focus group they have. This teacher provides ongoing training and support as the member carries out the school-approved literacy curriculum. Members are also under the general supervision of the superintendent or principal who checks in weekly to ensure member and teacher satisfaction. The second supervision strategy is on a programmatic level. Bi-monthly, the Program Director goes out to each elementary school to conduct a formal site visit, assess member progress and growth, determine areas for future training and supervision, and make sure activities are being carried out as detailed in position descriptions, contracts, and Memorandums of Agreements. A formal site visit form is completed that details member progress, observations, and growth areas. Each member is observed doing at least one tutoring session. And immediately after, the Program Director conducts a follow up with the members to discuss any concerns or areas of growth. Every other week, the Program Director distributes a newsletter that provides basic updates, due dates, and information about what is happening in the program at the different school sites. In addition, the newsletter always has a space where a new activity is shared that members can incorporate into their daily lesson plans. And ongoing communication is maintained

## Narratives

through continued correspondence via e mail, text, and phone.

The site supervisors are always appointed yearly by the school superintendent. They are typically the teacher who works most closely with the member. However, some superintendents choose to be the site supervisor. In August, the beginning of each year, the Program Director meets individually with each site supervisor. This meeting serves as a review of the program along with opportunities to discuss a diversity of topics including concerns about members, program updates and changes, performance measures, past performance, characteristics of a successful service site, prohibited activities, and other pre-determined topics.

Prohibited activities are discussed and trained on in a few ways. First, the member contract that is read through, trained on, and initialized by each member during orientation has a section on prohibited activities. In orientation, we have a specific training on prohibited activities that has members look at various potential activities that they could engage in where they determine if it is appropriate or prohibited to reinforce what they have read and signed in their member contract. And through site visits, we regularly monitor member activities to ensure members are doing what was agreed on in their approved and collaboratively developed (between school and program) position descriptions. Overall, the Program Director is in constant contact with the site supervisor and school site superintendents to continually monitor the program and members.

### G. OUTCOME: PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The overall change we hope to see as a result of our program is an increase in the percentage of students at each elementary school who are reading at or above grade level, with the ultimate goal of keeping them at grade level as they progress to higher grades. On a yearly basis, we aim to support 500 students who will complete our year long program, with 75% of the students who completed the program and did not benchmark at the beginning of the year to benchmark at the end. Completion will be defined as being a part of the corps focus group of the member which requires first meeting with the member a minimum of five times and then participating in daily tutoring at least 3 times per week for 30 -- 45 minutes per day. This number and percentage were determined through ongoing conversations with the superintendent of Jennings School, Mr. Ballenger, who worked with the other school superintendents in ongoing meetings to arrive at a realistic number.

Each member will track daily activity and student progress on a data collection form provided by L2R and enter that data in OnCorps. Formal student assessments will happen three times a year with reports submitted to the program director. These assessments happen in September, December, and May and are formally entered in our data collection form and system.

### CURRENT GRANTEES ONLY:

The first two years for which we have data showed progress among the struggling readers that

## Narratives

participated in the program. The performance measure for both years was 75% of the students who did not benchmark at the beginning of the year, would benchmark at the end of the year. The first year, 2009-10, 83% of the students met their grade level benchmarks and in 2010-11 96.8% of the students met their grade level benchmarks.

### H. VOLUNTEER GENERATION

One goal of our program is to generate volunteers, including the students and families, that can help to support our schools and students alongside the members. Each member will be responsible for recruiting a minimum of 5 volunteers. And at each school, the member team is responsible for planning a service project that directly benefits the school at which they are serving. Volunteers recruited will be asked to serve at one of the planned school service projects. Specifically, we are asking our members to focus their recruitment on the students and their families. By doing this, we encourage the people that use the school services to play a role in its upkeep and success. Each school tracks in their yearly report card the number of volunteer hours per student by parents and/or family members. For most of the schools in our district, this number is very low. Our hope is that as a result of the members' recruitment and planned projects, these numbers will rise. And as a result, our students and their families will be more engaged in their school which also plays a role in student success. In addition, we hope that by having volunteers come into the schools, students will see that there are many community members who are invested in their success. Projects we have developed in the past and involved students and other volunteers in the process include tree planting and food collection drives for the holiday season. To support members in this effort, we will provide each site with packets they can use during presentations and outreach strategies. And during their bi-monthly site visits, the Program Director will provide specific time to support members to fine tuning their volunteer generation strategies and their school service projects. Each member will have access to online training on volunteer generation and service project planning, available through the national service resource center and VISTA campus, for which they will earn training hours upon completion.

### I. TUTORING PROGRAMS ONLY

All members who are selected for the L2R program are checked for minimum qualifications which include a high school diploma and ability to read and write at a certain level. Each application includes a writing piece that is scored on sentence construction and grammar. And in the interview, members are graded on their verbal abilities. We also look for individuals who have college degrees and certificates in education. Prospective members also write a piece about why they want to become an AmeriCorps member and why they want to play a role in child literacy. Throughout this process and in training, program staff consistently review grammar as a necessary piece of student success.

During orientation, Program Director, Susan Cargill, MS.ED, Certified Reading Specialist covers a

## Narratives

diversity of literacy trainings that are based on the core state standards and sequence and scope discussed in the Evidence Based section of this grant. Topics include strategies on how to identify struggling readers, Evidence based resources on Strategies to Engage Reluctant Readers Engaging and Motivating Disinterested, Hesitant, and Tuned-Out Students by Bryan Harris, Battling Boredom 99 Strategies to Spark Student Engagement by Bryan Harris, 5 Big Ideas in Reading, and much more. The National Reading Panel's analysis made it clear that the best approach to reading instruction is one that incorporates explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, systematic phonics (i.e., alphabetic principle) instruction, methods to improve fluency, and ways to enhance comprehension. All of these are emphasized in our orientation, on-site training, and ongoing supervision.

### Organizational Capability

#### II. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

##### A. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING

Jennings School is the legal applicant of this AmeriCorps grant. Jennings is a rural school in Pawnee County with a population of 1,016 and has served the community for generations. Jennings operates a yearly budget of \$1.4 million and receives various federal funding such as Title I, Indian Ed Part A, Special Ed, and Preschool Ages 3-5. The funding to support the AmeriCorps program represents about 26.2% of the overall Jennings School budget. And to support the program, 71% of the funding has come from the Corporation. The School budget is made up of the following percentages: Title I 3.8%, Indian Education Part A 1.3%, Special Education 3.0%, Preschool .64, Salaries 65.6%.

The mission of the Jennings School as a progressive caring community is to maintain educational excellence and optimal learning experiences for the children of all abilities and backgrounds. Our school is continually striving to promote lifelong learners and responsible, caring, young people who prepare for the ever-increasing demands of a changing and dynamic society. We believe that an effective school program provides a safe, positive, and nurturing environment that fosters the character as well as the mind. We believe that learning is facilitated rather than imposed. Therefore, we are committed to teamwork, open communication, and shared decision making with our parent-school community. Jennings leaders work to ensure continual school improvement and appropriate learning opportunities for each child.

The primary contact for this grant is Susan Cargill, Program Director, and the secondary contact is Chris Ballenger, Superintendent of Jennings Public School.

Jennings School is in the third year of their first 3-year AmeriCorps grant. To support this grant, each school site provides \$3,000 per half time member as a part of their signed Memorandum of Understanding. In addition, we have raised other financial and in-kind resources from Central Technology Center who donated meeting space; Logan County Health Department and other

## Narratives

community groups who provide in-kind training to our members; DAVCO who donated the use of equipment; Highway 99 Quik Stop who donated advertising space; and Cimarron Telephone Company who donated advertising space and held the Cimtel 5K Race to promote recognition of AmeriCorps. The staff that supports the L2R AmeriCorps program has a great deal of experience in literacy, education, and grant management. Susan Cargill will serve as both the Primary Contact and Program Director. Susan has a master's degree in education, is a Reading Specialist, and Certified in Elementary Administration and Education, with 23 Years Teaching Experience including 3rd grade, kindergarten and preschool. Susan has worked with the program since its inception three years ago and has worked closely each year with each of the site superintendents to ensure a successful program. Susan Cargill also offers reading specialist consulting to the sites. Chris Ballenger will serve as the Secondary Contact. Chris has a MS, ED. and Superintendent Certification, with 12 years experience. Chris is seen as a leader among our 17 school district group. Chris is regularly visible in our various communities, serving as a leader as a coach for several little league teams in adjoining areas and as a volunteer firefighter on the Jennings Volunteer Fire Department. Michelle Francies, Encumbrance Clerk, will provide administrative and grant support through preparation of the living allowances and managing the budget, tracking expenditures, and monitoring the grant for compliance. Michelle has three years of experience with the AmeriCorps program. Michelle regularly attends meetings that keep her up to date on reporting and managing the Jennings School budget. Michelle also volunteers at many of the after school events that directly benefit the students.

The Jennings Board of Education will be the governing body for the L2R program. Susan Cargill, Program Director, will submit a Periodic Expense Report to the school board at the regularly scheduled meetings.

### A. SUSTAINABILITY

As we continue our program and raise increased awareness of our success, it is our goal to move towards program sustainability in terms of fund diversification. This task is not an easy one in that the areas in which our members serve are very rural, remote, and resource poor. There are no major foundations in our areas and the income levels of those who live in these eight counties are low. However, we will strive to increase the dollar support our schools provide and the non-cash support they provide through teacher time for training and supervision and donated curriculum.

Chris Ballenger, Superintendent of Jennings School, was made aware of the AmeriCorps grant opportunity almost four years ago by a colleague. Chris Ballenger collaborated with superintendents in the 17 schools mentioned in this grant that all serve a large population of students in poverty as indicated by those eligible for free and reduced lunch most of which represent 80% and more of their total student population. Through ongoing meetings, they analyzed reading scores from the Oklahoma

## Narratives

Core Curriculum Test and consensus was made that the need for literacy tutoring existed based on the reading scores across these 17 schools. The site superintendents agreed to participate in the grant and contribute a cash match of \$3000 per half time member. Chris then contacted Melinda Points, Assistant Director of the Oklahoma State Commission, who agreed to meet with the interested superintendents. A meeting was held at the Central Vocational Technology Center in Drumright Oklahoma in August 2009. Melinda Points presented AmeriCorps 101 and answered program questions from the site superintendents. The sites were then given a hand out that had information such as Characteristics of a Super Successful Service Site, Recruiting Members, When is Best to Recruit, and Benefits Beyond the Education Award to name a few. Chris Ballenger then asked Susan Cargill to be the program director and wrote the grant, in collaboration with the other superintendents, and was notified of the award in June 2009. And yearly, the superintendents come together to assess the program and discuss improvements and next steps. Teacher and member feedback are also incorporated as decisions about future years are made.

### B. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Jennings School and the L2R AmeriCorps program will prevent and detect compliance issues by first ensuring knowledge of the grant regulations. All sites are trained on site expectations, prohibited activities, and program requirements prior to the start of each program year. Sites are also provided with handbooks that put all training details in writing.

Susan Cargill, Program Director, will work closely with the Commission and attend all required meetings at dates and locations specified in the future. Each of these meetings provides training and information on AmeriCorps, grants and fiscal management, and effective practices on program management. In addition, Chris, Susan, and Michelle will all take the online grants and fiscal management courses that are now on the National Service Resource Center to enhance their existing knowledge.

The Program Director will also keep member files and reports up to date and do ongoing desk audits to ensure regular compliance. Susan will review and approve only activities that are not prohibited. If instances of risk or noncompliance are identified, the program director will meet with the service site to rectify the noncompliance issue. Site compliance forms are filled out during each site visit. If the sites are not in compliance after assistance from L2R, they will no longer be a partner.

### C. CURRENT GRANTEES ONLY

For both completed program years, all slots were recruited and filled.

In 2009-10, our retention rate was 100% for full time members and 78% for half time members.

Members that did leave were due to unplanned life circumstances such as spouse employment relocation, difficult pregnancy, and one who decided not to serve after the enrollment period. In 2010-

## Narratives

11, our retention rate was 100% for full time members and 81% for half time members, an increase in half time member retention rate of 3%.

To address our previous retention rates, we have improved our selection process by making it a 2-step strategy. By having the sites narrow the applicants down to two members, our hope is that through the second interview commitment can truly be assessed and life circumstances can be addressed. In addition, we are increasing the amount of site visits we do at each school as a strategy to check member progress and ensure satisfaction.

### A. PERFORMANCE TARGETS AND DEMONSTRATED COMPLIANCE

The first two years for which we have data showed progress among the struggling readers that participated in the program, with all performance measures being met. The performance measure for both years was 75% of the students who did not benchmark at the beginning of the year, would benchmark at the end of the year. The first year, 2009-10, 83% of the students met their grade level benchmarks and in the second year, 2010-11 96.8% of the students met their grade level benchmarks. In the last two full program years, our grant has been in full compliance. The commission has audited our program yearly with no findings. Jennings School is audited (which includes the AmeriCorps budget) annually by Ralph Osburn, CPA with no findings on the AmeriCorps grant.

### OPERATING SITES AND MEMBER SERVICE SITES

As detailed in this application, there are 17 elementary schools in which our members are serving, located in 17 distinct school districts in the rural NE region of Oklahoma Allen Bowden, Anderson, Barnsdall, Cleveland, Crescent, Depew, Drumright, Hominy, Jennings, Lonestar, Mannford, Mason, Morrison, Pawnee, Prettywater, Ripley, and Wilson. The members serving in these districts provide services in eight counties: Creek, Osage, Logan, Pawnee, Okfuskee, Noble, Payne, and Okmulgee. The superintendents of this 8-county region meet on a regular basis through formal and informal meetings. When the program was developed three years ago, each superintendent had the option of participating in the planning dialogue, to assess the school data, and determine their participation. Based upon school data, the elementary schools were determined to be a focus for this program because of the academic challenges identified specifically in literacy rates. Each of the schools then had to submit a plan for how they would support the member or members by submitting information such as site supervisor assignment, supervision plan, ability to provide determined cash match, and commitment to provide training, assessment and curriculum support yearly, to name a few.

All of the schools that were selected work closely together in a variety of capacities. Each of the schools serve as peer support for one another as they share resources, information and systems that can help one another meet certain academic standards. The superintendents of these schools regularly meet by area and across the state for formal meetings for various purposes. Because of the close relationship and

## Narratives

the leadership role that Mr. Ballenger plays in the community, Jennings was chosen as the legal applicant who could then distribute members to the approved schools and provide ongoing support and monitoring.

### Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

#### III. COST EFFECTIVENESS AND BUDGET ADEQUACY

##### A. COST EFFECTIVENESS

L2R has a total budget request for \$371,712 with \$105,712 as grantee share and \$266,001 as CNCS share. With the proposed budget, we will have a match of \$13,300 per half time member, 72% CNCS and 28% grantee. As stated previously, each school site provides \$3000 cash per HT member as match and commits this match in writing through signed site agreements: Allen Bowden \$6,000, Anderson \$6,000, Drumright \$12,000, Hominy, \$9,000, Jennings \$9,000, Lonestar \$6,000, Mannford \$9,000, Mason \$3,000, Morrison \$3,000, Prettywater \$15,000, Pawnee \$3,000, Wilson \$3,000, Ripley \$3,000, Depew \$6,000, Crescent \$6,000, Barnsdall \$6,000, and Cleveland \$3,000. This is a total of \$120,000. In kind site contributions will total \$4000 in office supplies, computer use, technical support, and site supervisor time.

##### B. CURRENT GRANTEES ONLY

Our current cost per MSY this year is 13,300 and our request for the next grant cycle is 13,300, with no increase.

##### C. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Districts where L2R members will serve are from a wide-spread region in rural Northeastern Oklahoma that is sparsely populated and has very limited resources. According to the 2010 School District Report Card, 15 of the 17 member districts are below the state average in population. The largest population is 9,233 and the smallest population is 846. Many of the schools where members will serve are located in communities rather than towns and as such have very few resources. There is also little opportunity for gainful employment unless one travels 30-45 minutes to Tulsa or Stillwater to work. Of the 17 sites, 7 are above the state average for unemployment and 4 are equal to the state average.

##### C. BUDGET ADEQUACY

L2R has a total budget request for \$369,052 with \$103,051 as grantee share and \$266,001 as CNCS share. With the proposed budget, we will have a match of \$13,300 per MSY, 72% CNCS and 28% grantee. Costs that are associated with our budget include 1 FT program director, staff travel to CNCS sponsored meetings, member training supplies, 1 evaluation of program by an Oklahoma State University graduate student, criminal background checks, and 40 HT members living allowance and associated costs, as detailed in the budget. Our budget breakdown for this proposal is 28% grantee and 72% CNCS.

## Narratives

Background checks will be conducted on all L2R members and staff. This includes FBI fingerprint checks, state registry checks and a national sex offender registry since all serve vulnerable populations. Each check is \$83 per background check for 40 members and 2 staff for a total of \$3486. The fingerprint fee is \$10 per member, totaling \$420 for a grand total of \$3906

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

#### D. EVALUATION SUMMARY OR PLAN

L2R will conduct external evaluations employing Ashleigh Sorrell Rose. Ms. Rose is an independent evaluator, she received a Bachelors of Science degree in Sociology from Oklahoma City University. She is the Director of Research at United Way of Central Oklahoma, where her primary job responsibilities include writing two local, trend-based research publications, Vital Signs and The Pulse. Ms. Sorrell Rose previously served as the AmeriCorps Program Director for Project Transformation, where she led the development and implementation of a program-wide evaluation plan. L2R will work closely with Ashleigh Sorrell Rose to develop a questionnaire for the sites and members to complete. The data collected will be used to help us strengthen the program.

The external evaluations will be sent to the Corporation as stated by the application directions. Lead to Read remains committed to conducting future independent evaluations to document the impact of member service and continuous improvement.

### Amendment Justification

N/A

### Clarification Summary

N/A Section I. Program Operating Costs

1. A. Personnel Expense: Please verify that the staff members listed as 100% on the AmeriCorps budget are not involved in fundraising or grant writing, including drafting of the AmeriCorps grant proposal. The program director, Susan Cargill will spend 100% of her time as the AmeriCorps program director. An outside grant writer was contracted to write the grant and the grant was read by the program director in the evenings on her own time. None of her time charged to the AmeriCorps grant will be spent fundraising or writing grants.

The application narrative describes personnel that are not identified in the budget; please clarify how these positions will be supported financially.

Chris Ballenger, Superintendent and Michelle Francis, Encumbrance Clerk's time will be included in

## Narratives

Section III as part of the administrative cost.

Member travel : Members are reimbursed by the sites per Memorandum of Agreement at the rate per mile by the sites.

1. H. Evaluation: Please clarify that costs do not include the daily/weekly gathering of data to assess progress toward meeting performance measures.

Evaluation costs do not include the daily/weekly gathering of data to assess progress toward meeting performance measures. The cost of this evaluation will include a broader range of information on program performance and its context, unintended benefits and how L2R might be improved or changed.

The source of match was entered incorrectly. L2R will place all 40 requested members at throughout their 17 sites. The source of funds has been corrected to \$120,000 (40 members X \$3,000 cash match provided by the host sites)

2. Please provide more detail on how the program plans to connect members to each other during their term of service.

D. Member Experience

Members are given the opportunity to connect to other members through social networking. Members also exchange contact information during orientation. Members are encouraged to contact each other during their term of service. Lead to Read hosts a "Life After AmeriCorps" event to engage members during their term of service. Members share how AmeriCorps has influenced their life. Such discussions include "How Far I Have I come and Where Am I Going?" and "Because of my service/volunteerism, I am ..."

If member travel expenses will be incurred please explain how this will be supported financially.

Members are reimbursed individually by the sites per Memorandum of Agreement at the rate paid per mile by the sites.

Performance Measure Clarification Items:

L2R will comply with the national performance measure criteria reflected in the NOFO:

## Narratives

- \*measures align with the need, activities and outcomes described in the narrative
- \*outputs and outcomes are correctly aligned as directed in the NOFO background document
- \*measures utilize rigorous methodologies to demonstrate significant impacts

Please explain why 75 % of students or 375 students is an aggressive target for your program's primary performance measure. It appears that you exceeded targets for year one and two of your formula grant. Please increase this target or explain why the program feels this target is still aggressive for your fourth year of programming.

375 students remains an aggressive target for the fourth year of the grant because members may not be tutoring the same students as the previous year. Since the goal of the program is for students to "benchmark" or have the ability to read at grade level by the end of the school year the percentage of gain 75% remains an aggressive but attainable target.

3. Please clarify how the program will identify when a student has met "benchmark" and include this in the performance measure strategy section.

Sites will use the evidence-based reading tools that they are currently using which are: BEAR, Literacy First, DIBELS, or STAR. Students are assessed at the beginning, middle, and end of the year.

"Benchmark" means that the student has reached grade level according to the site selected research based instrument.

4. Please explain the pre and post instruments in your performance measure strategy section.

Lead to Read is in 17 school districts. Districts may use one of the following evidence based reading assessment programs: STAR, DIBELS, BEARS, Literacy First.

Each of these reading curricula has pre and post tests to assess the students' reading levels. The students who are not reading at grade level according to the site selected assessment are placed with an AmeriCorps member who will work one on one or small groups implementing researched based reading strategies.

### Continuation Changes

N/A





## Required Documents

### Document Name

### Status

Evaluation

Already on File at CNCS

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable