

# 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:

07-DEC-11

STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:

2b. APPLICATION ID:

12AC134722

4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:

FEDERAL IDENTIFIER:

12ACHNM0010003

**5. APPLICATION INFORMATION**

LEGAL NAME: Rio Grande Educational Collaborative

DUNS NUMBER: 030255892

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

P. O. Box 12994  
Albuquerque NM 87195 - 0994  
County:

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

NAME: Peter Sanchez  
TELEPHONE NUMBER: (505) 836-0306  
FAX NUMBER:  
INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: psanchez@atrisco.org

6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN):

850471881

7. TYPE OF APPLICANT:

7a. Non-Profit  
7b. Community-Based Organization

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:

Reading and Math Success

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

Bernalillo, Torrance and Santa Fe Counties in central New Mexico

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

13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 08/01/12      END DATE: 07/31/15

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

15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #:

a. FEDERAL	\$ 132,518.00
b. APPLICANT	\$ 165,404.00
c. STATE	\$ 0.00
d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00
<b>g. TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 297,922.00</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:

Peter Sanchez

b. TITLE:

c. TELEPHONE NUMBER:

(505) 836-0306

d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:

e. DATE SIGNED:

04/25/12

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

Twenty half-time AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 200 volunteers to develop and provide the Rio Grande Educational Collaborative Reading and Math Success program in twenty schools in Bernalillo, Torrance and Santa Fe Counties. The program will focus on education, demonstrating increased academic performance in reading and math among 900 students who complete the program. The CNCS investment of \$124,874 will be matched with \$108,198.

## Rationale and Approach

A. Need:

The proposed program serves central New Mexico including the counties of Bernalillo, Torrance and Santa Fe Counties. All of these counties are worse off compared to the state and nation on a number of indicators. The total population of the three counties is 786,899. A summary of key indicators demonstrating the need for this program are:

Bernalillo County (Bernalillo Public Schools):

- \* 11.4 percent poverty rate
- \* 30.4 percent of the households speak English as a second language
- \* 9.3 have limited ability to speak English
- \* Median family income is \$58,314
- \* 59.3 percent on-time high school graduation rate\*
- \* 14 percent of adults do not have a high school diploma

Torrance County (Moriarty-Edgewood School District):

- \* 19.4 percent poverty rate
- \* 26.3 percent of the households speak English as a second language
- \* 9.6 percent have limited ability to speak English
- \* median family income is \$24,103
- \* 52.8 percent on-time high school graduation rate\*
- \* 25.2 percent of adults do not have a high school diploma

Santa Fe County (Santa Fe Public Schools):

- \* 13.4 percent poverty rate
- \* 35.9 percent of the households speak English as a second language
- \* 13 percent have limited ability to speak English
- \* median family income is \$42,742
- \* 60 percent on-time high school graduation rate\*
- \* 14.5 percent of adults do not have a high school diploma

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New Mexico:

- \* 18.1 percent family poverty rate
- \* 35.9 percent of the households speak English as a second language
- \* 10.1 percent have limited ability to speak English
- \* median family income is \$42,742
- \* 64.8 percent on-time high school graduation rate\*
- \* 17.9 percent of adults do not have a high school diploma

U.S.:

- \* 9.9 percent poverty rate
- \* 19.6 percent of the households speak English as a second language
- \* 15.5 percent of adults do not have a high school diploma
- \* 8.6 percent have limited ability to speak English
- \* Median family income is \$51,425
- \* 69 percent on-time high school graduation rate\*
- \* 15.4 percent of adults do not have a high school diploma
- \* class of 2009-10, 4-year Cohort Graduation Rate (New Mexico Voices for Children)

Source for data other than high school graduation: (U. S. Census Bureau),

Many of the neighborhoods served by RGEC after-school programs have much higher rates of poverty than the overall county figures. The proposed program will target students, who are at-risk of academic failure (performing below grade-level), speak English as a second language, raised by grandparents or single parents, and/or are from families challenged economically. Most of the schools served include grades K-5, but a few include the 6th grade.

The ethnicity of existing RGEC after-school program students are: Hispanic -- 60 percent, Asian - 5 percent, Native American -- 3 percent, African-American -- 2 percent and Caucasian -- 30 percent. The schools selected have at least 50% of their students eligible for free and reduced lunch. The following list indicates the 20 school sites to be served by the program and their zip code.

Albuquerque Public Schools District:

87102 -- Dolores Gonzales Elementary School, Longfellow Elementary School

87105 -- Pajarito, Los Padillas, Atrisco, Kit Carson, Valle Vista, Armijo Elementary Schools

87114 -- Sierra Vista Elementary School, Ventana Ranch Elementary School,

87120 -- SR Marmon Elementary School, Chaparral Elementary, Painted Sky Elementary

In the Edgwood/Moriarty School District:

87015 -- Edgwood Elementary School

87035 -- Mountainview Elementary School, Moriarty Elementary School

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In the Santa Fe Independent School District:

87507, Agua Fria Elementary School, Cesar Chavez Elementary School, Ramirez Thomas Elementary School

87501 Atalaya Elementary School

The above schools have been identified by school officials as in need of intensive reading and math instruction during the after-school time period. Ten are schools currently being served by RGEC, and ten will be new program sites. The following schools served by this grant have been designated as Tier III schools, indicating that they are targeted for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring by the New Mexico Public Education: Pajarito, Los Padillas, Kit Carson, Valle Vista and Cesar Chavez elementary schools.

The After School Alliance completed a report in 2010, "Evaluations Backgrounder: A Summary of Formal Evaluations of the Academic Impact of Afterschool Programs", which documented the impact of quality programs on academic achievement and school attendance. The data and conclusions from these studies suggest that quality afterschool programs can have a positive impact on a number of measures including student academic achievement. The Alliance, in a 2011 report on English Language Learners (ELL), concluded that quality after-school programs are needed to assist these students in becoming English proficient and succeed in school. The report also stated that "...more programs with expertise in supporting ELLs are needed to keep up with the number of ELL students entering U.S. public schools." (After School Alliance) The Rio Grande Educational Collaborative serves many ELL's and the proposed program will assist them in improving their literacy and English fluency.

The Promising Afterschool Programs Study of 3,000 low-income, ethnically-diverse elementary and middle school students found that regular participation in high-quality after school programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and development of good work habits (University of California at Irvine, 2007).

The project planning process regarding initiating the proposed Reading and Math Success program was very inclusive. School Principals, parents and community members were consulted in planning to expand to new sites and they identified the need for increased reading and math instruction. RGEC has received approximately 300 parent surveys with feedback from our after-school program. More than 95 percent of our parents/guardians give our programs "exceptional quality" marks. They rate us exceptional in areas of organization, curriculum, cleanliness and staff satisfaction. We use feedback from parents to continue to improve and modify our sites so that students receive the highest level of instruction and care while in our programs. Parents particularly comment that our Enrichment model, which includes homework help and project-based learning, is helping their children excel academically in school. These results also support the need for expansion to new schools, which will occur with the

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support of AmeriCorps.

In response to these needs and findings, Rio Grande Educational Collaborative (RGEC) began project planning, collaborating with schools, parents, University of New Mexico and AfterSchool Alliance, APS, SFISD, Edgewood/Moriarty School District, and Golden Apple of NM. RGEC also collated and summarized recent assessments, surveys, and community planning reports. This resulted in a findings summary that was presented to the RGEC Board of Directors. At this presentation the board discussed problems, needs, and recommendations for future work. The main recommendation was for RGEC to apply for AmeriCorps funding to improve the after-school programs impact on literacy and expand services to new schools. The Board of Directors approved this recommendation and asked RGEC staff to develop an action plan. This planning process and data review has resulted in a long term effort to improve and expand RGEC's after school educational programs in central New Mexico. Additionally, the proposed program supports the RGEC strategic plan completed in July 2011.

The local needs assessments reviewed are as follows: 1) "Central New Mexico Education Needs Assessment" developed by the University of New Mexico's (UNM) Bureau of Business and economic Research; 2) Funding Public Schools in New Mexico in the Great Recession by New Mexico Voices for Children 2011; and 3) 2010 Kids Count in New Mexico by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. These assessments all support the need for increased academic programs for youth in central New Mexico. According to the UNM study --"In short, the keys to successful educational support programs are early screening and intervention, parent, family and community engagement, and the coordination, alignment and integration of services and funding." In particular, this study pointed out the need for investments to improve the efficiency of existing funding and expand access to services. The proposed AmeriCorps program will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of after-school programs and increase the number of sites served.

This planning process will continue to be an integral part of project implementation and ongoing changes. Quarterly, we will pull together Site Supervisors, and other interested community agencies or individuals to discuss progress, challenges, and improvement. Through our partnership with the University of New Mexico, we will continue to review new assessments and data to ensure the Reading and Math Success (RMS) program meets the challenges our community faces. Not only will we look to research data, but we will meet with school officials, parents, families and youth in order to get feedback and elicit ideas that will increase our impact.

**B. Value Added AmeriCorps Member Roles and Responsibilities:**

The Reading and Math Success (RMS) program will serve youth in K-5 (or K-6) grades at twenty schools. The Program has a number of components: 1) reading instruction (computer-based and in small groups); 2) math instruction (computer-based and in small groups); 3) frequent testing to monitor

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progress on reading and math; 4) communicating student's progress to parents and teachers; 5) directing enrichment activities that support reading and math literacy. This comprehensive program is expected to increase reading and math skills of the youth participants, with the ultimate goal of higher educational attainment. Youth enrolled will also receive other after-school services including Science, Health, Social Studies, recreation and art programs.

The Reading and Math Success program will be conducted by one AmeriCorps member at each site (Instructor) five days per week at each site. Sites serve an average of 50 students per week. The program will be provided at all sites during the school year. Members will serve for 20-25 hours per week for 10 months per year, adhering to the school site schedule. The hours at sites may vary somewhat with most members working daily 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. except on Monday's when they will work from 9:00 a.m. to 6 p.m. Members will serve at sites Monday through Friday, with the exception of Monday mornings when member trainings will occur. Members will serve for 10 months from August through June.

AmeriCorps members will supplement the activities of after-school site staff members and have primary responsibility for implementation of the RMS program. Site staff members focus on activities for groups of students, lead arts and cultural activities, ensure child safety, monitor attendance. The Sites do not have enough staff members to provide the Reading and Math Success program as well as small group educational and computer based activities. AmeriCorps members will address this gap and through recruitment of a minimum of 10 volunteers at each site, developing a sustainable RMS program and documenting educational outcomes. RGEC only recently obtained the tools to measure and document educational results, and this will be fully implemented with the assistance of the AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps goals are to: 1) get things done; 2) strengthen communities; 3) encourage responsibility; and 4) expand opportunity. All of these goals will be fulfilled through the RMS program. AmeriCorps members will help youth improve student's reading and math skills and involve parents/volunteers in supporting academic achievement. Additionally, the program will improve academic performance which will strengthen communities, encourage responsibility and expand opportunities for students served. The AmeriCorps members to be recruited will come from neighborhoods and families similar to the students served. Thus they are uniquely qualified to serve as examples to youth at sites, to encourage youth to participate in service-learning activities, and to encourage students to seek higher education. 20 half-time AmeriCorps members, titled Instructors, will provide structured after school programming focused on improving reading and math skills and developing service-learning projects. The Instructors will utilize a computer based curriculum, which will be administered five days per week. The program will be provided daily to enrolled students. The Instructors will also meet with parents/caregivers to communicate their child's progress and recruit a minimum of 10 volunteers for their after-school site. AmeriCorps members will utilize a computer based curriculum to increase the literacy and math skills of

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youth served. RGEC recently purchased the Renaissance Learning STAR Enterprise software program that includes: 1) immediate feedback on reading and math strengths and weaknesses of each student; 2) "Early Literacy" for Kindergarten students; 3) "Accelerated Reader"; and 4) "Accelerated Math". This research based software package will give the AmeriCorps members the tools that they need to assist students in improving reading and math skills, and give the members continuous feedback on students' strengths and weaknesses. The curriculums guide instruction of the students providing interesting and fun exercises and are designed to meet the individual students' educational needs. The software program is also designed to meet New Mexico state educational standards. All after-school program staff including AmeriCorps members will be trained to utilize this software.

In order to keep students from falling behind in a technology driven world, it is our goal to incorporate the use of more technology-based learning through online projects, literature, and quizzes that challenge all reading levels. AmeriCorps members (Instructors), under the direction of after-school program teachers, will provide personalized assistance to the students in utilizing program curriculums. The Renaissance Learning STAR reading and math software will empower students to take responsibility and control over their educational journey by allowing them to login to get books and quizzes assigned by their Instructors.

The assessment tools built into the software/curriculums will measure improvement in reading and math skills. Regular assessments conducted by the software program will let the program know if we are on our way to our ultimate outcome of educational success. Students who complete the program are expected to be performing in math and reading at or above their grade level. Completion of the program is defined as regular attendance (at least 10 days per month) for at least six months.

Essential functions of the half-time Instructors will be to administer the reading and math curriculums to students. The Instructors will additionally plan and prepare daily lesson plans; read to the children from age appropriate approved books; help with homework; and facilitate activities such as service learning projects and experiential lessons. Other essential functions include recruiting new youth and volunteers to the program, and developing additional support services that will compliment programming. The Instructors will also encourage parental involvement in their child's education, assist with classroom management, serving snacks, and promote volunteer service at schools. Additionally, the Instructors will build partnerships with community members and businesses in order to build a sustainable program.

All AmeriCorps Members in the program are required to have the ability to carry out the previously listed essential functions with or without reasonable accommodations. The program will require that AmeriCorps members have the ability to work effectively within a team, communicate with and work with diverse people, be open to learning and new ideas, serve in a professional atmosphere, and organize

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themselves to effectively complete projects for which they are responsible.

### C. Evidence-Based:

The Renaissance Learning STAR math software is based on more than 94 research studies and reviews, 85 of which were led independently, and 33 are experimental or quasi-experimental. Of these studies 22 have been published in peer-reviewed journals. The reading software is supported by 169 research studies and reviews of which 143 were led independently, 31 are experimental or quasi-experimental. Of these studies 25 have been published in peer-reviewed journals.

Accelerated Math software and AM Best Practices have been shown by scientifically based research to be effective in helping educators dramatically accelerate math growth in K--12 classrooms. Numerous studies by independent researchers demonstrate that students' math abilities improve with the use of these tools, and that the performance gap between various subgroups of students is substantially reduced. And Accelerated Math was the first progress-monitoring tool reviewed by the National Center on Response to Intervention to be categorized as a mastery measurement tool ([www.rti4success.org](http://www.rti4success.org)) and has received highest ratings in that category.

Students in Accelerated Math classes gained 7 to 18 percentiles more than comparison students. In every grade and subgroup identified, such as eligibility for Title I and free or reduced-lunch programs, students in Accelerated Math classes performed better than students in classes not using the software. Additionally, students who more closely followed AM Best Practices by scoring greater than 85% correct and completing more objectives, gained even more than students who did not. Eighty percent of Accelerated Math educators stated that students were learning basic math skills better. (Ysseldyke)

Accelerated Reader (AR) software enhances reading skills. Using AR, this practice time is personalized to each student's individual level to ensure a high rate of success and immediately followed by feedback to help educators target instruction. Personalized reading practice includes guiding students to books at appropriate levels, closely monitoring their progress, and intervening with appropriate instruction when necessary.

In one study, teachers in grades 1 through 4 at three urban elementary schools were randomly assigned to use Accelerated Reader (AR) in their classes or serve in the control group. Students were pre- and post-tested with STAR Reading. Students in classes using Accelerated Reader experienced significant gains in reading achievement with a large effect size of  $d = 0.99$ . When compared to the control group, the AR group outperformed non-AR students at each grade level. As a whole, the AR group experienced significantly higher gains with an effect size of  $d = 0.38$ , the equivalent of moving from the 50th percentile rank (PR) to the 65th PR, while the comparison students remained at the 50th PR. (Magnolia Consulting)

These evidence-based curriculums, to be utilized by the AmeriCorps members, will improve the

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academic performance of students who complete the RMS program. Thus, the educational future of the students and the community will be enhanced.

### D. Member Experience:

The AmeriCorps program, as well as service and training efforts, will be supported by service-learning principles and strategies. Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. This definition captures the essence of our project.

Members will organize youth in the after-school program to plan and initiate at least four service-learning projects per year benefiting their neighborhoods. These projects may include activities on national service days such as Make a Difference Day and Global Youth Service Day. AmeriCorps members will also coordinate service projects with other local AmeriCorps programs on national service days and during AmeriCorps week. Members will also participate in a citizenship curriculum discussed in section F. (AmeriCorps Members Selection, Training and Supervision).

Members will be required to maintain a journal to document what they have learned, what has been challenging and what they plan to accomplish in the future. Members will have an opportunity during training sessions to share thoughts from their journal, if they choose, and to discuss group experiences and challenges. By experiencing the value of the process of reflecting on their experiences, they will be able to utilize the same process in conducting service-learning projects with youth at the sites.

AmeriCorps members will be required to wear AmeriCorps t-shirts or pins when doing outreach to the community, organizing or participating in parent activities, participating in service projects or other public events. AmeriCorps members will have an opportunity to work with AmeriCorps and VISTA members from other programs such as the New Mexico Forum for Youth, share training sessions with them, and participate in service projects and AmeriCorps week. As RGEC supervises three VISTAs who will be invited to training sessions as appropriate and be included in planned service projects with the AmeriCorps members. During the Pre-Service Orientation and weekly training sessions members will be reminded of the importance of identifying themselves as AmeriCorps members to school personnel, parents and community members. Members will also be coached during training sessions on how to promote awareness of the AmeriCorps program in the community.

Community service is a component of programs at RGEC sites that would be expanded through the AmeriCorps member's activities. In the past, after-school program students have organized and led community service projects including collecting items for food banks, supporting the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Center, Habitat for Humanity and local school clothing drives. These activities will be enhanced through AmeriCorps members' leadership and implementation of service-learning principles.

### E. Overall Picture

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Reading and Math Success (RMS) program addresses the focus area of youth educational attainment and addresses the goals of improved literacy rates. The CNCS focus area addressed is improving educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle and high schools. While the program will only focus on elementary schools, preparing these students for success later in school is essential. Students who fall behind in elementary grades face an increasingly difficult challenge to be successful in middle and high school.

Most of the neighborhoods served by the proposed program have higher school dropout rates and lower rates of educational achievement than other schools in the County. The AmeriCorps members recruited will be committed to helping others and be committed to achieving an educational award to assist with their own educational expenses. Therefore, these college students are excellent role models for youth, particularly since many will have lived in the neighborhoods served, or similar neighborhoods. Thus, youth will be able to relate to role models who come from families similar to their own.

Repeated research has demonstrated the importance of continued educational stimulation outside of the conventional classroom in order to increase literacy and math skills in elementary aged children. RGEC educational after-school activities are aligned with New Mexico State Academic Standards and collaboration with school teachers and administrators ensure that after-school tutoring and homework assistance reinforces classroom teaching. However, many students enrolled in our programs are not performing at grade level in reading and math thus, a more intensive academic program is needed.

By utilizing research-based and computer-based curriculums, that have demonstrated educational outcomes with similar groups of low-income youth, AmeriCorps members will have the tools that they need to achieve an increase in literacy and math literacy with the youth served. RGEC is also committed to supporting AmeriCorps members so that they will gain skills useful in continuing higher education, achieve experience related to their University major, and learn skills such as communication and team building which will prepare them for their career after AmeriCorps and college graduation. AmeriCorps members will gain valuable experience teaching students as well as developing skills in curriculum building, classroom management, and creating innovative lesson plans.

### F. AmeriCorps Member Selection, Training and Supervision:

The Reading and Math Success (RMS) program will recruit diverse AmeriCorps members that are similar to the overall population in the three counties served. The University of New Mexico in Albuquerque has a student population of over 25,000 students, and it is this population that provides the greatest opportunity for recruitment of members. Other institutions of higher education where recruitment will occur include Central New Mexico Community College and New Mexico Highlands University.

We will begin recruitment with outreach to students who are juniors, seniors or graduate students

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majoring in Education, Math, English or related subjects. To attract applications from individuals with disabilities we will work with Adelante Development Center and other agencies serving this population. It is our intention to recruit members that are interested in a career teaching or working with children and are interested in furthering their own education. Preference will be given to college students who have experience working with youth, and have a strong interest in serving the community. Members selected will be well qualified to serve as good role models for students served. AmeriCorps members (Instructors) are required to have the ability to speak and write English, and the ability to speak and write Spanish is a plus, as many families in Albuquerque, speak Spanish as their first language. In order to attract high quality applicants that have completed at least two years of higher education, RGEC will offer a living allowance of \$10,800 for members serving the full ten months in half-time positions.

Our goal is to engage diverse individuals that are integrated together to serve their communities, make a difference, and increase participation in service. Through role playing, cultural competency awareness, leadership development, inclusion training, and volunteer opportunities, our program will represent our community ideals -- to engage diverse individuals, serving together to improve academic performance. Our selection process is comprehensive. All interested members must attend an informative training session prior to applying. We will also ensure that posters and other visual materials represent the Albuquerque area and program diversity. An inclusive service environment starts with individual actions and attitudes and to ensure all staff and after-school program sites understand inclusion and cultural competency, we will require a mandatory training on these topics.

Potential members will be interviewed by the Program Coordinator and the Site Coordinator to determine the extent to which the applicants have the necessary skills and abilities, as well as their commitment to service. After selection of members RGEC will conduct background checks including New Mexico Criminal Background, National Sex Offender Public Registry and FBI checks.

AmeriCorps members will work as a team with site program staff, to make sure that all activities are coordinated and meet program standards. Members will serve at the school site assigned to them, and will spend most of their time at that site. However, occasionally they may be requested to travel to meetings in order to further community collaboration or to recruit volunteers.

The Reading and Math Success program will utilize a year-long member training and development plan which supports the members as a group, and as individuals. All members will attend a two-week Pre-Service Orientation (PSO) which will address topics such as National Service, AmeriCorps policies and requirements, teaching strategies, forms, reports and documents, CPR/First AID, leadership, behavior guidance, risk management, detecting and reporting child abuse and neglect, community specific information, and the Renaissance Learning STAR reading and math curriculums.

Attendance at PSO will help members understand the needs of youth and relate effectively with them;

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utilize the software to implement interesting, structured, and creative activities; help youth resolve behavioral problems and issues between themselves and others; interact effectively with parents, center staff, and any other stakeholders; and understand the program mission, goals, performance measurements, policies, and regulations.

During PSO, all members will participate in trainings that will emphasize program requirements and compliance issues. Because these topics can be overwhelming for new members, we will incorporate various learning techniques so members not only have an opportunity to read the information, but also experience it. For example, we will conduct an activity where members role play various situations that may or may not be allowable. After these activities, AmeriCorps Members will discuss how they view the situation and implications if such a situation arise.

Weekly training sessions will cover topics such as: citizenship, communication, planning service-learning and other topics requested by members. Training sessions will also address conflict resolution, effective communication, leadership, team building, volunteer recruitment, and other topics as determined by members. Additional activities include review of the curriculum and discussion of issues encountered by the members in planning and implementing the program. Additionally, members will participate in citizenship education utilizing the A Roadmap to Civic Engagement curriculum, created by the Washington Service Corps.

Members will be supported in learning about the communities they serve, will acquire direct service skill sets and knowledge, and gain larger understanding of how communities and civic participation work. To compliment this learning, members will provide direct and indirect service. Throughout year-long meetings and trainings, members will have an opportunity to reflect, explore ways to enhance the program, and discuss how greater impact can occur. Our project will help members gain critical thinking skills and learn how to incorporate that thinking into civic action. All members must understand their role and what they are and are not supposed to do. As such, our program will utilize various techniques to ensure members do not participate in prohibited activities as determined by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Beginning with member recruitment and selection, program staff will clearly, both verbally and in writing, articulate member roles and prohibited activities.

The Reading and Math Success program will utilize a year-long supervision plan that will support member retention, satisfaction, and group cohesion. Each member will be supported by the Site Supervisor as well as program staff. Members will meet individually each week with their Site Supervisor to assess their service and determine needed support or training. During weekly training sessions, members will interact with each other and reflect upon their experiences. During trainings, program staff will ask questions to elicit challenges, successes, effective practices, and overall service reflection.

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The Program Coordinator will evaluate members individually (considering Site Supervisor comments) mid and end-of-year to assess member performance, service satisfaction, and areas of improvement. Additionally, members will complete self-assessments and each member will meet with the Program Coordinator before the midpoint of the service year to 1) assess hours completed; 2) discuss successes and challenges; 3) assess supervisor and member relationships; 4) obtain feedback on past and future trainings and overall program satisfaction; and 5) determine their Life After AmeriCorps goals. Members will have the opportunity each day to seek support and guidance from their Site Supervisor as well as the Program Coordinator. At a site-level this supervision will occur on an informal basis, although serve to compliment formal opportunities.

All Site Supervisors will be required to attend an orientation and attend regular meetings to ensure understanding of program and prohibited activities. The Program Coordinator and Director of After School Services will monitor all sites to ensure program compliance and high quality service provision. Using a program developed monitoring tool, we will conduct interviews with members and staff, checking for prohibited activities. If such activities are found, program staff will work with both members and sites to ensure future compliance and go back into time sheets and delete applicable member time. If such occurrences happen again, a site and member action plan will be developed.

G. Outcome: Performance Measure

OUTPUTS:

1. 900 students will complete participation in the Reading and Math Success Program, attending the program regularly for at least six months. (ED2)
2. A total of 1,000 youth ages 5-18 will receive instruction designed to improve reading and math literacy (of which 900 will complete).
3. 20 half-time AmeriCorps members will be recruited and provided with orientation and ongoing-training to perform program activities.
3. At least 80 percent of AmeriCorps members will participate in at least 6 local service projects associated with national service days.
4. 200 volunteers will be recruited to assist with special events, mentoring or service projects at after-school program sites.

OUTCOMES:

1. 80 percent of students completing program will demonstrate improved academic performance in literacy and math. (ED5)

Improved academic performance is defined as a one grade level improvement in reading and math at completion (regular attendance for at least six months). RGECE will utilize the Renaissance Learning STAR Enterprise software program which provides immediate feedback on reading and math strengths

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and weakness of each student. STAR allows for testing in less than 15 minutes per student, and provides reports for designed for instructors and parents. This program has also been supported by a number of research studies indicating that it is norm-referenced assessment instrument (additional details included in section C).

AmeriCorps members will maintain a service roster for all youth participating in program activities, and document the outputs and outcomes detailed above. Program documentation will be submitted by members monthly to the Program Coordinator. Upon receipt of the service roster and member reports, the Program Coordinator will input information into a spreadsheet, tracking program data to serve as the foundation for reporting.

### H. Volunteer Generation

AmeriCorps members will encourage the youth and their families participating in the Reading and Math Success program to become volunteers in the community and/or at the school site to strengthen the connection with their child and the community while instilling a family sense of the importance of civic engagement. Volunteers may help with parent meetings at the schools, community service projects, special events or mentor students. Volunteers interacting with students on a regular basis as mentors will be required to complete school volunteer background checks.

As discussed in previously, AmeriCorps members will recruit at least 10 volunteers at each school to support program activities such as mentoring, assisting with special events, and supporting service-learning projects. Volunteers will also be recruited to support a minimum of special projects including "Lights on AfterSchool", "Luminarias for Literacy" and parent-teacher school events. Members will seek to recruit family members of youth served, community residents and business leaders.

### I. Tutoring Programs Only

Members recruited will have completed at least two years of college and will utilize a research-based curriculum discussed in section C. The program meets all requirements for AmeriCorps tutoring programs including receiving pre and in-service training that is high quality and research-based.

## Organizational Capability

### A. Organizational Background and Staffing:

Founded in 2000, The Rio Grande Educational Collaborative (RGEC) is a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization that currently provides pathways to success for approximately 835 children in Bernalillo and surrounding counties. The MISSION of RGEC is to leverage resources and opportunities to create a continuum of services to support the social and academic dreams of children, their families and their communities. Our VISION is to dedicate our organization to preparing children, family and community for life-long success. RGEC is an independent organization governed by an five member local board of directors. These volunteer professionals contribute a wealth of knowledge and expertise to guide the

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organization's operations and sustainability. The Board recognizes the need to build a larger and more diverse nonprofit board or adding an Advisory Board, and is working on this issue.

Over the course of the past ten years, RGEC has worked primarily within Albuquerque's South Valley community to bring a wide variety of educational programs to children including before- and after-school academic-based enrichment classes along with academic and skill development. Additional programs focus on dropout prevention for high school students, summer jobs, and tutoring. After-school programs have been expanded to serve challenged students in four school districts in Bernalillo, Santa Fe, Sandoval and Torrance counties. RGEC's before and after-school programs both excite and stimulate children. Unique classes such as sports and fitness, drama, music, computer literacy, strategic games, dance (traditional and modern), nutrition and cooking, arts and crafts, and science and life skills, are interesting and educational.

RGEC has managed a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant for the past four years and a Children Youth and Families Department matching grant. Additionally, current funding includes a Picasso grant from the State of New Mexico, and awards from school districts, counties and United Way. During the last four years RGEC has managed \$1.9 million in grant funds. Additional sources of funding include donations and parent fees.

RGEC has extensive experience with collaboration, for example RGEC is a partner agency with the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Community Schools (ABC) Collaborative effort. The ABC Community Schools Partnership is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of Community Schools that will provide comprehensive services for families at their neighborhood school.

The parents of students attending RGEC's after-school program have routinely rated the program highly. While the program has not had the ability in the past to measure educational outcomes, the agency has recently obtained the STAR software that will facilitate monitoring of students' progress and produce reports on academic progress of students.

The primary contact for this grant application will be Michael Lujan, MPA, Director of After School Services and the secondary contact will be Peter Sanchez, CEO. Currently, RGEC has 12 full-time staff including other key staff members-- V.P. of Operations and V.P. of Finance. All of these staff members will spend some time supporting and overseeing this program. However, the majority of the responsibility for directing activities under this grant will be the responsibility of Michael Lujan. Mr. Lujan has previously worked with the University of New Mexico (UNM) AmeriCorps program, supervising AmeriCorps members (63 total members). He has also been a Program Manager for the 21st Century Afterschool grant with the Albuquerque Public Schools in partnership with the UNM. The Program Coordinator will be responsible for fiscal issues and reporting under the supervision of the Director of After School Services.

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The Program Coordinator is a new position that will be filled with an existing qualified staff member on a half-time basis. This staff member, Monica Talero, has served as a Site Supervisor at RGEN for the last 3 years. Ms. Talero has a B.A. in Arts and Sciences, three years of experience with educational programs, and will spend 40% of her time on this program. Some of her existing duties will be transferred to other staff members so that she will be able to complete all required responsibilities of the Program Coordinator position. Ms. Talero will be responsible for fiscal issues and reporting under the supervision of the Director of After School Services.

The Director of After School Services will provide an in-depth orientation to the Program Coordinator at the beginning of the contract period on their changed responsibilities, AmeriCorps regulations and prohibited activities, the Reading and Math Success program design, and the program budget.

The Program Coordinator will be responsible for relationships with the school sites where AmeriCorps members will be assigned. Monthly site visits to each school will be conducted by the Program Coordinator to observe that AmeriCorps regulations are being followed, and to maintain communication with members and Site Supervisors. A site visit form will be utilized document visits and any issues regarding members, program services and/or regulations observed or reported. Additionally, the Program Coordinator will conduct an initial orientation meeting with all Site Supervisor, and facilitate monthly meetings to maintain communication and reinforce AmeriCorps rules and policies.

The Program Coordinator will report to the Director of After School Services, and provide support to AmeriCorps members and coordinate member trainings. The Program Coordinator will be responsible for communicating with the members and Site Supervisor regarding any issues relating to member time or performance. The Program Coordinator will keep the Director of After School Services aware of any issues with AmeriCorps members or at sites. Site Supervisor will be responsible for reviewing time sheets and day to day supervision of members.

The Program Coordinator will attend one or more local training sessions on management topics provided by the Center for Nonprofit Management which is supported by the United Way of Central New Mexico and Albuquerque Community Foundation. The Program Coordinator and the Director of After School Services will also attend required New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism workshops and be responsible for sharing information learned with other RGEN (including site) staff members.

The Program Coordinator will be responsible for planning weekly member trainings, recruitment, data entry and collection, site visits, management of member files, member supervision/development and preparation of program and fiscal reports. The Director of After School Services will be responsible for supervising the Program Coordinator, reviewing program and fiscal reports, program evaluation, and continuous program quality improvement.

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New and existing RGED staff members receive an extensive orientation reviewing agency policies and procedures, grants and collaborations, organizational chart, job descriptions and performance plans. Weekly staff meetings are held to provide updates on projects, and include team building activities. Supervisors provide feedback quarterly to RGED employees regarding progress made on their performance plans.

### B. Sustainability

RGED is a social enterprise, depending primarily on earned-income to support its programs. The After School program has grown quickly over the last two years, substantially funded by parent fees. Additionally, federal, state and local grants have allowed us to serve children from families not able to afford the fees. The organization also has years of experience in working with volunteers and funders to support community efforts and problems. We recognize that new funding sources will be required for sustainability and expansion (serving more children from low and moderate income families) and we have the capacity to develop additional sources of funding from foundations, corporations and individual donors. Our board members are involved in fund raising and personally donate to the organization.

### C. Compliance and Accountability

The Director of After School Services and the Program Coordinator will be responsible for reviewing and ensuring compliance of all AmeriCorps rules and regulations. Prior to placement of AmeriCorps members at a site, the Site Supervisor and staff members will be provided an orientation and review of grant regulations. As discussed previously, any observed or reported situations that may indicate noncompliance will be investigated and documented by the Program Coordinator. In cases where AmeriCorps members or site staff members have violated rules, the organization's disciplinary procedures will be followed. This disciplinary procedure will be included in a Member Handbook, given to all AmeriCorps members and Site Supervisors, and will be reviewed with members during the Pre-Service Orientation.

### D. Special Circumstances

As discussed in the Program Design section on "Need", the counties served have a higher poverty rate than the nation as a whole. RGED serve a resource-poor community and the Reading and Math Success program was designed to impact educational success and in the long run have a positive impact on family and community income levels.

## Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

### A. Cost Effectiveness

Our proposed cost per MSY is \$13,252. This amount is based on reasonable costs outlined in the grant to ensure we can carry out our program activities, the requested CNCS funds will be used to pay part of the

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AmeriCorps member costs. Because of the significant commitment by RGEC to the proposed program, they are making a significant match of 56% of the total program budget.

RGEC has always counted on diverse community-wide financial support. Non-federal support will come from corporate and individual contributions, program fees, fundraising and local foundation grants. We are committed to securing additional resources for the program and sites through cash and in-kind donations if needed.

If awarded, AmeriCorps grant funds from AmeriCorps through the New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism, will represents less than 4 percent our revenue, and the matching funds are from parent fees, other grants, and donations from our operating budget. BGBEP will make a substantial contribution to the proposed program. Cash matching funds of \$165,102 will be provided by operating funds and there will be an in-kind contribution of \$302. The Director of After School Services has extensive experience managing AmeriCorps members and RGEC currently supervises three VISTA members.

B. Current Grantees Only: N/A

C. Special Circumstances N/A

D. Budget Adequacy

The budget is adequate to support the AmeriCorps members and achievement of program outcomes. The budget includes funds for member training, educational supplies, and essential travel for staff and members, and background checks. The budget also includes personnel costs and site costs associated with the program. Considerable planning has gone into development of the budget to make sure that RGEC can carry out the program as proposed. Should any unexpected expenditures occur, RGEC has adequate reserves to meet program needs.

### Works Cited

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Educational Research Service. Copetitive Learning: Can Computer Games Increase Student Achievement. Alexandria, VA: Educational Research Service, 2010.

Jorgensen, Margaret. "San Antonio Independent School District, Implementation of Kid's College." 2010.

Magnolia Consulting. A final report forthe evaluation of Renaissance Learning's Accelerated Reader program. Charlottesville, VA, 2010.

New Mexico Voices for Children. High School Graduation Rates by School District . Albuquerque, 2009.

U. S. Census Bureau. "American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates." Fact Finder. 2005 - 2009 .

Ysseldyke, J. & Tardrew, S. Differentiating math instruction: A large-scale study of Accelerated Math.

## Narratives

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### **Evaluation Summary or Plan**

N/A

### **Amendment Justification**

N/A

### **Clarification Summary**

There are multiple levels of supervision and management within RGEC programs, the Coordinator is one level of that management staff supporting the program. The Program Coordinator manages all aspects of the program, including oversight of the AmeriCorps members. The Site Supervisor's at each site are tasked with effectively overseeing the work of the AmeriCorps members (on a daily basis) within each school site. Instructors at the site will also be available to mentor and assist members, as the members will be an integral part of each school site team.

The Program Coordinator will be responsible for meeting and training site staff members on AmeriCorps standards and reporting.

### **Continuation Changes**

N/a





# Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Not Applicable

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable