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Executive Summary

Easter Seals Wisconsin (ESW) has successfully managed an AmeriCorps program since 2004 to benefit individuals with disabilities statewide. The application for FY 2013-14 requests an expansion from 19.47 MSY to 24.27 MSY, while lowering the cost/MSY. The ESW AmeriCorps Partnership Program leverages the service of AmeriCorps members to help solve three critical community needs in Wisconsin: 1) respite care for caregivers of individuals with severe and multiple disabilities, 2) therapeutic recreation for individuals with disabilities 3) social support and therapeutic recreation for veterans and their family members. Desired grant award start date: 9/1/13. Desired member enrollment period: through 8/31/14. The CNCS investment of \$261,726 will be matched by ESW with \$270,772.

Rationale and Approach

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RESPIRE CARE: Wisconsin is home to 62,300 youth with cognitive or physical disabilities and 292,100 adults with an independent living disability due to a physical, mental or emotional condition. (2010 Disability Status Report, WI) Wisconsin has significantly downsized institutionalized settings for individuals with disabling conditions affecting their ability to live independently. The movement towards community living requires family members to coordinate daily medical and personal needs for their loved one. Research has shown that caregiving is stressful, impacting caregivers' lives through declining health, forced changes in employment and competing demands from other family members. Caregivers report deteriorating health and energy, sleep problems, stress, panic attacks, physical pain and depression among health factors worsened as a result of caregiving. (Evercare & Natl Alliance for Caregiving, 2006) Respite care is one service that stands out as needed to improve the quality of daily lives of caregivers. In a national study of 900 caregivers, respite was the most desired and needed service. (Caserta, Lund, Wright and Redburn 1997) Respite provides temporary relief from the ongoing responsibility of caring for an individual with special needs and is shown to help sustain family stability, avoid out-of-home placement and reduce the likelihood of abuse and neglect. (Commonwealth Fund 2005) Caregiving in rural communities carries a unique set of challenges. Medical care and social services are few and far between and transportation is scarce; there are fewer community resources, such as adult day care centers where people with disabilities can go for care and recreation, providing caregivers a much-needed break. There is an average of just one respite provider for every 333 caregivers in WI. The greatest need is for families taking care of

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someone with behavioral or developmental issues, precisely the families served by the ESW AmeriCorps Partnership Program. (Chamberlain Research Consultants, 2006)

THERAPEUTIC RECREATION: ESW Respite Camp and Camp Wawbeek share 400 acres; Wawbeek, the oldest Easter Seals camp in the nation, serves children and adults with physical and cognitive disabilities in year-round, residential, therapeutic recreation programs. ESW Camps intersect two rural counties, per USDA Beale Code; more than 50% of participants in ESW Camps statewide live in rural counties, where there is little to no respite care or recreational opportunities. In U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services Healthy People 2020, a 10-year plan to promote health and prevent disease, one objective is to "increase the proportion of people with disabilities who report having access to health and wellness programs." Healthy behaviors, and a drive toward positive health across the lifespan, are no different for an individual with a disability; recreation and socialization are critically important. Studies show that individuals with disabilities run a higher-than-average risk for preventable chronic problems such as obesity and diabetes. (Kinne et al 2004) Research also shows that by engaging in healthful behaviors such as exercise, individuals with disabilities can lower this risk and prevent additional disability-related losses, e.g. bone density, as well as increase overall mental and physical well-being. (Thomas 1999) Therapeutic recreation for individuals with disabilities is needed to support functional independence, improve social skills, prevent secondary disabilities caused by physical limitations and raise overall quality of life. (Cooper, R.A. et al 1999) However, such opportunities are limited due to inaccessibility, financial constraints, unsuitable activities for skill level and shortage of trained providers. (Kendal et al 2005) Mainstream recreation programs often serve individuals with mild disabilities, but more people are surviving traumatic births and injuries that result in severe disabilities; the result is a sharp rise in demand for recreation services for people with severe disabilities.

SPECIALTY CAMPS have been introduced by ESW, directly due to assistance of members, to meet the unique needs of 1) Young adults preparing to "transition" to independent living and 2) Veterans and their families. 1) TRANSITIONS: Current evidence about the transition to adulthood for youth with disabilities indicates the process is extremely challenging; policies and services are uncoordinated and families lack the information needed to navigate the transition. (CODA 2007) Thus, many transitions are not successful. This limits opportunities for full participation in adult life. (Stewart 2006; While et al 2004) Stories from youth and parents indicate that they feel like they have "been dropped off a cliff" once they reach adulthood. (Stewart et al 2001) Transitions Camp helps young adults gain life skills, e.g. time management, goal-setting, career exploration, at a critical time in their

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lives. 2) VETERANS: To ensure success, the armed forces proliferates values of toughness and mastery under stress, often in conflict with admitting personal mental health symptoms or difficulty with functioning. (Tanielian, Jaycox 2008) The U.S. Dept of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates that 25% of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans currently live with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or depression. A recent RAND study revealed that the chief remedy for dealing with the effects of combat when returning home is feeling a part of the community. ESW Veterans Family Camps provide a conduit to access information and receive ongoing social support. Caregivers report that the veterans in their care have depression or anxiety (70%) and PTSD (60%). 68% of caregivers of veterans consider their caregiving highly stressful vs. 31% of caregivers of adults nationwide. Of those with children at home, 57% report the children have emotional problems as a result of their caregiving. (Natl Alliance for Caregiving, 2010) Veterans Family Camp provides a respite for families and therapeutic recreation for veterans and family members, to strengthen healing, confidence and family bonds, in a unique camp environment.

AMERICORPS MEMBERS AS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SOLVE COMMUNITY

PROBLEMS: The involvement of members over the years has enabled ESW to add tremendous value to its programs and to grow exponentially to an extent that existing staff and resources would not allow. The AmeriCorps program has helped ESW meet a critical care need in WI : assisting people with disabilities to live in their own homes and communities while improving the health and well-being of their families at risk for stress-related disorders due to the demands of care. In 2013-14 the majority of members will continue to serve as Respite Apprentices at ESW Camps, providing intensive personal care and leading therapeutic recreation activities for individuals with disabilities, youth in transition, and veterans and their families. Additional members will form a Leadership team consisting of four Coordinators in the areas of Volunteer Recruitment & Management, Camp Outreach, Transitions, and Veterans & Families. Leadership team/Coordinators: ESW is aware that no one member can solve all the needs of the community singlehandedly; to this end, Coordinators will assume a leadership role, serving as role models for other members by demonstrating exemplary skills and leadership in community service. They will play an important role in bringing the communities, campers and various program components together. Leadership team members will be given extra support to allow them to develop new project activities and sources of community support. They will work with ESW staff to facilitate idea-sharing, working together on projects with supervisors and other members, and will play a support role in recruiting campers and community volunteers. Respite Apprentices: During the school year, participants attending weekend camp sessions will benefit from

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24 Minimum-Time (MT) members serving 5-month terms (Sept-Jan; Jan-May). Each member will provide respite care and therapeutic recreation activities no less than 6 weekends. During the summer, both camps offer week-long sessions and participants will benefit from 35 Half-Time (HT) members serving 4-month terms (May-Aug). Members are required to reside at Camp in order to provide personal care for their camper at night, and are provided dorm-style housing and meals when camp is in session. In all instances, members do not take the place of staff but rather serve to enhance programming and expand services.

TABLE 1: AC FT/MT/QT Members in Leadership Roles:

1. VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR: FT MSY; Supervisor: Respite Director. Recruits, trains and supports volunteers to serve at Camps, contacts colleges statewide that require service learning, posts opportunities on volunteer and job boards, attends volunteer and career fairs, uses social media to promote volunteerism at Camps. In the 2013-2014 program year, the Volunteer Coordinator will be an integral member of an ESW team charged with creating a survey to evaluate the volunteer experience throughout the agency (2013-2015 Wisconsin State Service Plan).
2. OUTREACH COORDINATOR: QT MSY; Supervisor: Wawbeek Director. Conducts outreach activities to ensure that WI residents with disabilities have access to ESW respite and therapeutic recreation programs; identifies opportunities to reach under-represented populations including rural, low-income, youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, people of color and Native Americans.
3. TRANSITIONS COORDINATOR: MT MSY; Supervisor: Wawbeek Director. Helps plan, implement and evaluate three Transitions Weekends, develops materials for families and helps to identify and recruit staff and volunteers.
4. VETERANS COORDINATOR: MT MSY; Supervisor: Wawbeek Director. Provides outreach to expand the number of veterans and family members served by building partnerships with other community organizations serving veterans; helps plan, implement and evaluate two Veterans Family Camp programs.

EVIDENCE-BASED/EVIDENCE-INFORMED AND MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT: ESW implements programs based on best-practices in order to achieve outstanding outcomes. In 2012, ESW began a partnership with a UW Professor of Special Education to better evaluate the impact of ESW programs on the community. Work has begun to: 1) assess the impact of the AmeriCorps experience on the career choice of former members. An initial evaluation will survey 5 years of past members; it will be conducted annually thereafter, one year post-term, to gather information which will be used to enhance the member experience (2013-2015 Wisconsin State Service Plan), 2) collect

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data to assess the living situations of campers and the impact of the Camp experience on relationships in the home community, 3) survey caregivers to determine the impact of ESW Camps on keeping the camper in an inclusive, least restrictive environment, and 4) survey caregivers, employers and caseworkers to determine the degree of system and/or policy change in camper interactions with the community, social services and/or on the job. ESW plans to develop an applicable instrument and conduct a survey for # 1 in year one, and implement others in years two and three of the grant cycle. RESPITE: ESW Respite Camp and Camp Wawbeek programs, offered year-round in one-week and weekend sessions, serve many families from areas where few or no respite services exist. Individuals ages 3 to older adult are welcomed. Many have been turned away from other respite programs because their medical or physical needs were too great or behaviors too aggressive. ESW Respite Camp has been able to serve every individual who has sought service, no matter how challenging the needs; it fills an essential need, not only as the only statewide provider of out-of-home, overnight respite care in WI, but also because it uniquely provides one-to-one care for all participants who are medically fragile or have severely challenging behaviors. An average of 807 children and adults have been served annually at Respite Camp since 2004-05, the year the ESW AmeriCorps Partnership Program began, a dramatic increase in service from 547 participants in 2003-04. Growth of 48% is a direct result of expanding the capacity of the program with members and volunteers recruited by members. ESW has also leveraged CNCS support to secure community revenue for capital projects, e.g. a new residence hall, expanding program capacity.

THERAPEUTIC RECREATION: In 2011-12, a record-breaking 948 campers were served at Camp Wawbeek, the highest enrollment in its 75 year history, due to the outreach and assistance of members. Children and adults with disabilities are provided therapeutic recreation and health education opportunities, helping them adopt healthy lifestyles while reducing their sense of social isolation and increasing the quality of life for both participants and their caregivers. All 59 members serving as Respite Apprentices will receive training and support to develop recreation programs for participants that reinforce healthy behaviors and socialization, e.g. yoga, creating musical productions, barrier-free team sports and the challenge of a Ropes Course, activities to which campers generally do not have access in their communities. Members help campers increase fine and gross motor skills as well as self-esteem and independence, educating and inspiring them to see a different vision of themselves and reducing their sense of social isolation.

SPECIALTY CAMPS. 1) TRANSITIONS builds on skills and behaviors learned from one session to the next, culminating in a group activity involving camper planning, development and implementation.

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Core components utilize an integrated model of strategies based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) framework. Personal interventions provide skill development and customized services; Person-Environment Fit provides support and information from a holistic lifespan perspective; Environmental interventions provide real-world experiences. Each camper's level of participation is based on an assessment of self-awareness; campers are involved in decision-making about goals. (Sands, Spencer, Gliner & Swaim 1999) In 2011-2012, ESW served 66 Transitions campers, an increase of 52 campers in two years, due to member support and outreach; an estimated 80 campers will be served in 2012-2013. The program will be supported by one MT member serving as Transitions Coordinator, who will work with the Wawbeek Director to provide outreach to expand the number of campers served, and to plan and enhance program activities based on best practices. 2) VETERANS: Since 2009 ESW has offered two Veterans Family Camps each year at no charge for veterans and their family members. Again, as a result of the efforts of the Veterans Coordinator, the program has grown from 41 veterans and family members served in 2010-11 to an impressive 105 in 2011-12. VA reports that WI is home to 427,527 veterans, 33% of whom reside in metropolitan Milwaukee and Madison, the source of most of our referrals. Veterans Family Camps provide opportunities for accessible recreation, therapeutic and informational group sessions, and activities for the entire family such as fishing, an accessible Ropes Course and zip line, and a trip to a local water park, with the goal of building communication, trust and social support. Trained therapists from a local VA Hospital facilitate group sessions to discuss family issues, readjustment support, problem-solving and resource referral. Families form social support networks which often continue and prove helpful when they return home. Veterans Family Camp has made a real difference in the lives of these families, as it uniquely addresses needs for establishing peer and caregiver support, respite, and information about VA services, and strengthens relationships within the veterans' families. Research indicates that the more positive exchanges that pass among family members, the higher level of overall family satisfaction. (Perlesz, et al 2000) Participant comments: "It was great to see [veteran] smile so much. You are an outstanding group of people who put your heart and soul into it." "Meeting new people was wonderful--finding ties with others who have had similar experiences and getting great info on where to turn for help." "[Veteran] thought he would never fish again. You opened a new world. No words can sum up the experience." Based on requests from participants and supported by evidence, individual financial consultation as well as "journaling" activities will be incorporated into the 2013-2014 Veterans Family Camp program, to help to alleviate some of the stress the veterans and families face. One of the "10 Tips for Resilience During Homecoming" recommended by the American

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Psychological Assn is to identify people who can help--including financial advisers who can provide direct help with stressful financial issues facing families. ESW has secured the services of two attorneys to provide individual consulting services, pro bono, for veterans who request this assistance. One attorney is a VA accredited attorney; the other specializes in financial planning/long term care benefits for veterans. The journaling project, initiated by the current Veterans Coordinator, is based on studies pointing to the benefits of journaling to relieve stress of veterans and family members as a result of the transition to civilian life. Clinical trials indicate that writing about stressful or traumatic experiences can enhance immune system response, reduce recovery times, and promote physical, psychological and social well-being. (Pennebaker, 2004) Veterans Family Camp will be supported by one MT member serving as Veterans Family Coordinator, who will work with the Wawbeek Director to provide outreach to expand the number of veterans and family members served, plan and enhance program activities, and build partnerships with other programs serving veterans.

DESCRIBE PERFORMANCE AGAINST OBJECTIVES DURING LAST FULL YEAR OF OPERATION: ESW was awarded 19.47 MSY in the 2011-12 program year, equal to 34,250 member service hours. Members served 40,395 hours; the extra 6,000+ service hours show the commitment of members to ESW programs. The 2011-12 ESW AmeriCorps Partnership Program had a recruitment rate of 100% and a retention rate of 98.2%, losing just one member due to a family health issue. All performance measures for the 2011-12 program year were met or exceeded. Focus Area: HEALTHY FUTURES: Healthy Lifestyles PM; Target outcome: 75% of people with disabilities who participate in health education programs at Camp Wawbeek will report improved confidence in their self-image and abilities to adopt healthy lifestyles. Exceeded: 87%. Health Education Programs; Target output: members will help 650 people with disabilities participate in health education programs at ESW Camps that promote healthy lifestyles. Exceeded: 1,719.

Access to Preventative Health Services PM; Target outcome: 70% of farmers with disabilities who receive FARM vocational rehabilitation services will indicate an increased quality of life so that they can continue working and have the knowledge to prevent further injury or secondary disabilities and chronic illness. Met: 70%. Health information and health care access; Target output: 1,000 farmers with disabilities, medically underserved and living in rural areas, will receive information about ESW FARM vocational rehabilitation services, preventive health care, and/or improving access to health services. Exceeded: 1,523. Respite PM; Target outcome: 90% of caregivers for clients who attend ESW Wawbeek or Respite Camps will indicate a reduction in stress and an increased quality of life as a result of the client's participation so that they continue to provide care for their family member with a

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disability in a community-based setting. Exceeded: 100%. Serve Wisconsin PM 1. Volunteer Recruitment, Management and Support; Target outputs: recruit, manage and support 414 community volunteers who will provide 7,500 hours of service. Exceeded: 437 volunteers provided 9,198 service hours. Serve Wisconsin PM 2. Citizenship; Target output: 100% of members who have successfully completed their term of service will have received at least 4 hours of Citizenship Training. Met: 100%.

Target intermediate outcome: 70% of members that have successfully completed their term of service will indicate in a post-service survey that they expect to volunteer in programs/activities designed to improve their community more than prior to their term of service. Exceeded: 72%.

MEMBER RECRUITMENT: ESW actively recruits members to serve as Coordinators in leadership roles and as Respite Apprentices at Wawbeek and Respite Camps. ESW actively seeks candidates of all faith, ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, education and disability backgrounds; applicants with experience or interest in therapeutic recreation, youth development and education are highly sought. Internet postings and college student newspapers, including minority-focused publications and support groups for people with disabilities, are primary sources for member recruitment. ESW uses My AmeriCorps Portal, ESW website, Facebook and other sources to announce AmeriCorps position availability. Camp Directors, AmeriCorps Leadership Coordinators and ESW staff travel to camp and summer job fairs in communities with diverse student populations in terms of race, ethnicity and socioeconomic backgrounds. They maintain relationships with the special education and therapeutic recreation departments in local colleges, who inform students about the opportunity to gain valuable training and experience. They send ESW Camps and AmeriCorps information to veterans programs, community partners and employment programs targeting underrepresented populations including low-income individuals, youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, rural residents and people of color. ESW has an Equal Opportunity & Affirmative Action Policy and employs a higher percentage of people with disabilities and women, and the same percentage of minorities, as the average number in the state workforce. During the past 8 years ESW has enrolled 15 members with known disabilities, e.g. cerebral palsy, hearing loss and Asperger Syndrome, including a former ESW client. Member enrollment procedures are consistent with the ESW Employee Handbook, non-discriminatory, and conforming to applicable local, state and federal laws and AmeriCorps guidelines.

MEMBER TRAINING: At the beginning of their service term, MT and QT members are required to receive a comprehensive orientation, including an overview of CNCS and its programs, Serve Wisconsin, ESW AmeriCorps Partnership Program, performance measures, citizenship training, and

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ESW mission, history and programs. As part of the enrollment process, members are required to sign a document detailing prohibited activities, and discussion to ensure members' understanding occurs at least 3 times in the term, led by the AmeriCorps Coordinator. HT Respite Apprentices and FT Volunteer Coordinator receive 3 weeks of orientation and program training. Respite Program training, held over 2 residential weeks at Camp, includes hands-on experience with campers who volunteer for the training exercise. Major components: 1) Health education, disability awareness, personal care, health and safety, 2) Camp policies and procedures, 3) Behavior management, conflict resolution and crisis management, 4) Therapeutic recreation, including developing program activities; Program Leadership training, e.g. Aquatics and Ropes Course. Four Respite Apprentices receive Red Cross Lifeguard training and certification in canoe rescue and safety; three receive certification in Transporting Passengers with Special Needs. Eleven receive training in assigned areas of program coordination: sports & games, drama & dance, nature, ropes course, arts & crafts. All members are required to develop civic engagement activities that reflect their life and member experience. Most members become certified in CPR and First Aid. MT Respite Apprentices, MT Transitions Coordinator, MT Veterans Family Coordinator, and QT Camp Outreach Coordinator receive a modified version of Respite Program training over one residential weekend. MT Respite Apprentices receive abbreviated Program Leadership training. The four Leadership team Coordinators are required to complete Community Emergency Response 8-hour Training (CERT-lite) and are encouraged to register as volunteers with their local CERT Response Team. Members who complete the training are eligible for travel reimbursement and can log service hours for training and participation in disaster preparedness/response efforts. All members receive ongoing training throughout their term of service. A monthly e-newsletter includes information about stress, conflict resolution and time management as well as opportunities for civic engagement. Regular member reflection occurs at each team meeting on topics including life after AmeriCorps, uses of Segal Education Award, professional development opportunities, and the value of civic engagement on multiple levels. ESW creates flexibility in ongoing training to meet the needs of members and campers and in sync with current events. For example, fall 2012 members identified a need to improve the accessibility/safety of the campfire area. Capitalizing on the enthusiasm of the members' initiative, the AmeriCorps Coordinator facilitated a member-driven "Make a Difference Day" mini-grant application which was successful in receiving funding from Serve Wisconsin.

MEMBER SUPERVISION: Each member is supervised by an ESW staff member who is always present at their service site. Supervision of member Coordinators who serve in leadership roles was

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described in Table 1. 24 MT and 19 HT Respite Apprentices are supervised by the ESW Respite Director. 16 HT Respite Apprentices are supervised by the ESW Camp Wawbeek Director. Members are fully integrated into the Camps. Supervisors meet regularly with members to discuss goals and work plans, offering them support and guidance. All HT and FT members receive weekly and final performance reviews to assess strengths and opportunities for growth. Mid-term and final performance reviews are provided for MT and QT members. The AmeriCorps Program Director and Coordinator meet weekly to monitor member progress and to ensure supervisory and fiscal oversight of the program. They provide training each August for ESW AmeriCorps supervisors, to review AmeriCorps policies and procedures, develop and review work plans for their members, and discuss best practices in management. The AmeriCorps Coordinator meets with supervisors quarterly to provide support and information, discuss member successes and challenges and member feedback on training and service activities, as well as troubleshoot work plans, review updates from Serve Wisconsin and the CNCS, and plan group activities.

MEMBER EXPERIENCE: Members serving with ESW often remark that their service experience is both challenging and life-changing. Members provide what can be extensive personal care; they nurture a safe environment for people with disabilities, many of whom have challenging or aggressive behaviors, to decrease their social isolation. These skills are acquired through direct care experience and their development requires that members give of their time, energy and talents wholeheartedly and freely. When members complete their term, they are proud of their professional growth and enhanced interpersonal skills, and can more readily envision how they can help improve the quality of life of others and their communities. They use this experience to attract, inspire, and help train volunteers, who then often go on to become members or counselors at ESW Camps. Members receive encouragement from ESW staff to become active, lifelong servants to identify and address community needs. The program ensures that members receive structured opportunities for reflection and discussion of civic responsibility. The Respite Director facilitates meetings for school year members at every Respite Weekend, and the AmeriCorps Coordinator facilitates weekly meetings for members serving during the summer, providing time to discuss their service-related successes and challenges, and participate in at least one activity from the CNCS "A Guide to Effective Citizenship through AmeriCorps" curriculum. Members are required to reflect on their experience; leading questions are presented at each meeting to help them reflect on what they have learned. Meetings include guest speakers from local nonprofits or government agencies serving people with disabilities, and dynamic discussions require member preparation through supplemental reading and assignments. For

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example, toward the end of their service term members reflect on how they have met the needs of Camp participants as well as their caregivers, and then discuss how citizens can assess the availability of, and promote access to, community-based, long-term care supports for people with disabilities. At the end of their term, members learn how to identify post-term service, educational and employment opportunities. They are provided information about post-secondary educational opportunities so that the Segal Education Award may help them prepare to serve their communities. Members review CNCS national service opportunities and learn about Peace Corps and domestic and international volunteer programs. All members are strongly encouraged to join AmeriCorps Alums to stay connected to the national service community. Many members come into the program with significant volunteer experience, yet are unfamiliar with newer search tools such as serve.gov.

VOLUNTEER GENERATION: The impact of volunteers on expanding the reach of ESW Camp programs cannot be overstated. This can be measured by: 1) Number of volunteers, which continues to grow, allowing ESW to serve more individuals with disabilities each year and reduce long waiting lists. The FT Volunteer Coordinator is central in the recruitment and training process as well as in volunteer management and support. AmeriCorps-generated volunteers have more than doubled from 191 in 2004-05, the first year of the program, to 437 in 2011-12. While community volunteers take on many roles, more than 100 provide direct personal care for participants in ESW Camps each year. This has had an enormous impact on families, participants and on respite care in Wisconsin, as ESW can expand its program capacity by approximately 2 participants per 3 volunteers. 2) Number of volunteer service groups who provide critical maintenance support for Camp facilities. 300+ volunteers provide thousands of hours in clean-up, painting and construction, saving approximately \$50,000 annually, so that more funds are available for programs. Table 1 describes the responsibilities of the FT Volunteer Coordinator, responsible for recruiting, assisting with training, and supporting volunteers to serve at ESW Camps during the 2013-14 program year. The 59 Respite Apprentices and 4 Coordinators serving at the Camps assist with managing volunteers who provide direct personal care and therapeutic recreation to participants. As part of their formal enrollment process, volunteers are educated about prohibited activities.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION: ESW AmeriCorps Partnership fosters member identity with AmeriCorps throughout their service. Members are required to wear the AmeriCorps logo on ESW-provided service gear whenever they log service hours, and are required to add the logo to all materials they distribute to the community. ESW displays the logo at its headquarters, all member service sites, on its website, annual report, newsletter and camp brochures.

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Members identify themselves as part of AmeriCorps from the very beginning of their service term. They receive an orientation to the program, including information about CNCS, its national service programs, a brief history of national service, and how the program impacts ESW and the families served. ESW member supervisors receive orientation biennially. Results from the 2011-2012 Member Development Survey indicated that members experienced a 32% increase in leadership skills, confidence, adapting to change and taking initiative. This growth will help members as they apply for employment and strive to serve their communities. Member comment: "AmeriCorps helped me improve professional skills I will need later in life including leadership, teamwork, communication and problem solving."

Organizational Capability

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND: Since 1926, ESW has created life-changing solutions for individuals with disabilities. ESW offers services to address community needs by providing recreation for children, respite care for families, helping farmers continue to farm after a disabling accident, and helping adults gain self-sufficiency through self-employment. The mission is to increase independence, maximize opportunities, minimize barriers and enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities. Primary and secondary contacts for this grant application are Rebecca Novak, AmeriCorps Program Director and Terri Jutzi, AmeriCorps Coordinator.

The ESW AmeriCorps Partnership has grown substantially since its inception in 2004, and ESW has provided the support needed for its expansion. ESW is a fiscally healthy nonprofit organization with a diversified funding base and a demonstrated record of successful experience raising funds to support services and new initiatives. Strong community support is key to its success. Private contributions and in-kind donations have steadily increased since the AmeriCorps program's inception. ESW spends the vast majority of its funds on direct service; program expenses are 87.3% of total expenses. These are indicators of sound fiscal and programmatic oversight by management and board, assuring financial and administrative support for the costs of operation of the program.

The ESW 2011-2012 operating budget of \$3.5 million, the most recently completed and audited fiscal year, was supported by the following funding sources: 40% Program Fees (individuals, counties, managed care organizations, WI Div of Vocational Rehabilitation); 19% Private Contributions & Grants (individual & corporate contributions, special events, foundation grants); 19% Grants from Government Agencies; 6% In-kind Donations; 6% Investment Income/Endowment fund; 5% Donation Center (sales of in-kind clothing donations to thrift store operation); 2% State of WI appropriation; 2% Bequests; 1% Misc (rental fees; other).

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The 2013-14 request for CNCS funds is \$261,726, which is 7% of the current ESW 2012-2013 operating budget of \$3,674,624. The AmeriCorps program is fully integrated into and supported by ESW and is designed to fit seamlessly in the ongoing operations of ESW programs. ESW is an organization with 58 employees, a home office including a full complement of office equipment, a computer network, IT specialist, Marketing department, and all of the supports needed to assure smooth operation of the AmeriCorps program. In 2011, at the request of Wisconsin's State Commission, ESW senior managers and the Chairman of the Board completed a Core Capacity Assessment Tool to determine agency strengths and opportunities for improvement within four core capacities critical for organizational success: adaptive, leadership, management and technical. Results indicated that the organization has extremely strong infrastructure, financial controls, leadership and ability to respond to or make changes, with no weaknesses in any capacity.

The ESW Board of Directors, CEO and management team are highly seasoned professionals with an exemplary record of fiscal and administrative oversight of the organization's \$3.7 million annual budget, \$1.6 million endowment and 400-acre campgrounds with a \$4 million value in land, buildings and equipment. The Board of Directors includes 17 members with professional expertise in finance, marketing, human resources, law, health care and education; some are consumers of services; all are strong and committed supporters of the AmeriCorps program. ESW has a long history of successfully administering AmeriCorps grants and other federal funds: AmeriCorps grant, now in ninth year; Dept of Labor ADA 2-year grant, Dept of Education National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) 3-year Demonstration grant; USDA AgrAbility grant for 20 years (5 four-year cycles; currently funded). In 2010 ESW was awarded a 3-year NIDRR Training grant as well as a 3-year Dept of Aging Lifespan Respite Care grant with WI Dept of Health Services. ESW has the experience and capacity to provide support to an external evaluator.

STAFFING: The management structure of ESW allows full support and oversight of the AmeriCorps program, with a record of highly successful management of the program since its inception in 2004.

Key personnel who staff the program are:

- 1) President & CEO for 19 years, Christine Fessler, M.S. Social Work, 40 years experience in nonprofit program and fiscal management. Role: overall administrative oversight of the AmeriCorps program.
- 2) AmeriCorps Program Director, Rebecca Novak, M.B.A., 20 years experience in nonprofit program development and grants management. Role: primary program and financial oversight, supervision of AmeriCorps Coordinator, oversight of reporting and compliance, and ESW liaison to Serve Wisconsin.
- 3) AmeriCorps Coordinator, Terri Jutzi, B.A. Nonprofit Management, M.A. Education, served as

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AmeriCorps* State member and with Serve Colorado as Program Officer/State Disability Coordinator. Role: screen and interview applicants, enroll/exit members, maintain member files, enter program data into OnCorps, collect data to document program implementation, e.g. service and program outputs/outcomes, provide resources for members to meet service goals, provide Orientation and Citizenship Training 4) CFO for 5 years, Pam Ganser, B.S. Accounting, 20 years experience in nonprofit fiscal management, accounting, auditing and human resources. Role: overall fiscal oversight and management, billing, financial reporting, and financial orientation and training to key AmeriCorps staff. 5) VP Program Development for 33 years, Ken Saville, B.S. Therapeutic Recreation, 33 years experience developing community partnerships for ESW Camps, camp facilities management, capital projects and local government relations. Role: technical assistance and oversight of the AmeriCorps program in the Camp sites; seek, track and monitor in-kind program match sources. 6) Director of Camp Wawbeek for 4 years, Carissa Miller, B.S. Recreation Therapy, 13 years experience in camp management. Role: supervision of AmeriCorps Leadership Coordinators and 16 HT summer Respite Apprentices; member recruitment and interviews; co-lead member training. 7) Director of Respite, Tony Bown, B.A. Therapeutic Recreation, 3 years camp program experience. Role: supervision of FT Volunteer Coordinator, 24 MT school year and 19 HT summer Respite Apprentices; member recruitment and interviews; co-lead member training.

In the past 8 completed program years, ESW has demonstrated an exceptional record in meeting its performance measures, having successfully met, and generally surpassed, 57 of 60 total PMs (outputs, intermediate and end outcomes). The program met all PMs in 2011-2012 while enrolling 100% and retaining 98.2% of its members, losing just one member due to a family health issue.

SUSTAINABILITY: The eight year history of a successful AmeriCorps program has enabled ESW programs to become notably more sustainable. Members have recruited and trained 151% more community volunteers, a remarkable gain of 290 volunteers annually at ESW Camps. These volunteers have provided critical personal care support to participants, as well as facility construction and maintenance, enabling ESW to expand services, both increasing attendance and assisting in program growth, demonstrated by the number of new buildings, accessible trails and facilities available. ESW has an increased core of committed volunteers, invested deeply in ESW programs, who help sustain member activities. Enhanced community relationships developed through AmeriCorps have led to expanded community involvement, e.g. volunteer projects, and have helped ESW diversify its funding sources, e.g. increased in-kind donations. Revenue from Camp fees has increased steadily, due to higher enrollment. ESW continues to actively pursue new funding sources,

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aided by the visibility provided by the program. In the 2011-2012 program year ESW reported 9,198 hours of volunteer service, exceeding the target of 7,500 hours, and valued at \$167,404, per IndependentSector.org. Table 2 details major stakeholders and providers of volunteer and in-kind support.

TABLE 2: SAMPLE Stakeholder/Community Volunteer/In-kind Support ~DELLS BOAT COMPANY (75 years support) In-kind boat rides on Wisconsin River for 900 campers/staff/members each summer~TOMMY BARTLETT EXPLORATORY (40 years support) 300 in-kind passes for campers/staff/members year-round~Area attractions incl DELLS DUCKS (10 years support) 320 in-kind passes for campers/staff/members including Veterans Family Camp~KIWANIS, CIRCLE K, KEY CLUB, WI ELKS ASSN Volunteer camp maintenance; fundraising and capital projects to benefit Camps~WI DEPT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (Tribal Coordinator) Education/referral at Milwaukee Indian Summerfest Veterans area~WM S MIDDLETON VETERANS HOSPITAL & CLEMENT J. ZABLOCKI VA MEDICAL CENTER Provide staff to lead support groups for veterans and family members~COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES Encourage students to volunteer at Camps and engage in service learning; in-kind evaluation on community impact of programs & design of survey instruments~ESW BOARD MEMBERS Volunteer fundraisers at events; provide in-kind medical and sanitation supplies; promote Camps statewide.

Excursions into the community are integral to the ESW Camps program, and have been since its inception. The participation of campers who use wheelchairs, or who have other physical or behavioral limitations, makes them feel that they can participate in local recreational activities too, and be "like everyone else" who is there to enjoy the Wisconsin Dells, a tourist area known for its water parks and family-oriented attractions. These experiences increase the campers' confidence and independent living skills, as they learn to be comfortable socially in such settings and successfully navigate the community. Many campers do not have the opportunity in their own communities to participate in such activities, due to the severity of their disabilities, the extent of their medical and physical needs, and/or their challenging behaviors. These recreational excursions allow campers to get out into the community so that they can develop the ability to function in public. It is important, too, for the community to see people with disabilities participating in local activities and to be integrated into the community. It is a visible way for local businesses and attractions to show their support for ESW and the individuals with disabilities served.

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: The AmeriCorps Program Director reviews AmeriCorps rules and regulations with ESW management and AmeriCorps staff on an annual basis, and reviews

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and approves, with the AmeriCorps Coordinator, all service plans for members with supervisors. At enrollment, members are required to sign a document detailing prohibited activities; the AmeriCorps Coordinator communicates with members at Orientation and quarterly during their term to ensure their understanding. The Coordinator discusses PMs, grant goals and member expectations at Orientation, including the member contract, listing prohibited activities. All members receive an AmeriCorps wallet-sized prohibited activities card provided by Serve Wisconsin. The AmeriCorps Coordinator and supervisors have an open-door policy to discuss member questions and issues. Members are provided with the National Service hotline number should they not feel comfortable approaching local staff. These systems have been put in place to ensure that members and staff have the knowledge to understand CNCS policies and regulations.

ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION: Throughout the history of the ESW AmeriCorps Partnership Program, now in its ninth year, the program has achieved an enrollment rate of 100% and has retained an average 98% of all enrolled members. In the recently completed 2011-12 program year, ESW had a 100% enrollment rate and 98.2% retention rate (losing one member due to a family issue).

PERFORMANCE TARGETS AND DEMONSTRATED COMPLIANCE: In the past 8 completed program years, ESW has demonstrated an exceptional record in meeting its performance measures, having successfully met, and generally surpassed, 57 of 60 total PMs (outputs, intermediate and end outcomes). The program met or exceeded all PMs in 2011-2012. ESW has a record of compliance and responsiveness and has never had a compliance issue or area of weakness identified.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

ESW has demonstrated its ability to secure diverse non-federal resources to meet its match through steadily increasing County Respite funding, individual fees, contributions and in-kind donations. These sources are dependent on program enrollment; growth of 48% in 9 years is a direct result of expanding program capacity with AmeriCorps members and volunteers. Fees have increased correspondingly, allowing ESW to sustain/ increase our match over time. The actual ESW match in its 9 years: \$59,746 (2004-05), \$54,956 (2005-06), \$75,859 (2006-07), \$89,653 (2007-08), \$91,525 (2008-09), \$122,053 (2009-10), \$226,000 (2010-11), \$234,750 (2011-12) and \$246,233 (budgeted 2012-13). The 2013-14 program budget accurately reflects the actual costs of existing members' service. The program budget is \$532,498; ESW will match \$270,772 (51%). ESW allowed for increased costs to manage existing and new members, e.g. food, member travel, service gear, lodging, and also increased its match by \$24,538 for program costs. ESW has worked hard to diversify and

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increase revenue to increase its share of costs to meet and exceed program goals. During the 2013-2014 program year, \$204,972 of match will be cash from Camp program fees; sources include individuals, Counties, and managed care organizations. \$54,000 will be in-kind support from local businesses which donate passes to recreational attractions year-round for members, campers and staff, and \$11,800 will be in-kind donations of supplies and other program operating costs.

COST PER MSY: The ESW AmeriCorps Partnership is highly cost effective, with an average cost per MSY of \$10,784, 81% of the maximum allowable cost of \$13,300. ESW proposes to match 51% of the program's total budget, more than the required match of 50% for a program in its tenth year.

BUDGET ADEQUACY: The proposed budget is adequate and necessary to support the program design and all proposed program activities, and is thoroughly linked to all outputs and outcomes. The majority of funds cover member living allowances and benefits as well as salaries/benefits of their supervisors and staff managing the grant.

MEMBER COSTS: Costs for 63 members (24.27 MSY) are \$135,982, 25.5% of the program budget. ESW is requesting \$122,384 to fund Member Costs, 47% of the CNCS grant. 63 members are integral for ESW to achieve its performance measures and goals to serve people with disabilities, veterans, and their families. Note the living allowance for 35 HT and 24 MT Respite Apprentices is less than the proportionate minimum allowance for a FT member, as room & board are provided during their service terms.

PERSONNEL EXPENSES/FRINGE BENEFITS: ESW personnel provide program management, member supervision and training, and program evaluation. Personnel expenses & fringe benefits for 6 staff members (2.57 FTE) total \$137,516, 26% of the program budget. **TRAVEL:** The ESW office located in Madison is 135 miles RT from the Camps in Wisconsin Dells. Travel covers staff meetings to monitor grant progress, member recruitment, and program-related conferences to meet performance measures. Member travel includes camper and volunteer recruitment, attending conferences, and training. Travel costs for 6 staff members and 63 members are \$10,043, 2% of the program budget.

SUPPLIES: Supplies are directly related to activities of the members and total \$83,480, 16% of the program budget. **STAFF TRAINING:** Camp staff attend conferences and training to enhance program quality, including activities that members will lead, and to renew CPR/AED/First Aid

instructor certifications, in order to train members cost effectively. Staff Training costs are \$1,225, less than 1% of the program budget. **MEMBER TRAINING:** ESW conducts extensive training of members to prepare them to provide personal care and therapeutic recreation for individuals with disabilities. Member Training costs of \$4,627 are less than 1% of the program budget. **EVALUATION:** ESW

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administers quality of life surveys for veterans and family members, and caregivers of individuals with disabilities who attend Camp. Printing/mailing costs total \$825, less than 1% of the program budget. OTHER PROGRAM OPERATING COSTS: ESW provides 50 weeks of lodging & food, at Camp, for 1 FT Volunteer Coordinator. 24 MT and 35 HT Respite Apprentices and 1 QT and 2 MT Coordinators are provided housing & meals when serving overnight at Camp. The cost to provide lodging for members is based on minimum wage law per diem, \$8.30/day. Food costs are \$12.45/member/day. Total lodging & food for members is \$74,717. Background checks are \$65/member, a total of \$4,095. Total Other Program Operating Costs are \$98,501, 18.5% of the program budget.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

The ESW AmeriCorp Partnership uses internal and external evaluations to measure program effectiveness. Findings from evaluations conducted in 2010-11 and 2011-12 follow.

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT. An internal pre- and post-test solicits member feedback on personal and professional growth as a result of their service. 2010-11 results: 30% increase in leadership skills, confidence, adapting to change and taking initiative. Feedback: service helped improve professional skills, e.g. leadership, teamwork, communication, problem solving. 2011-2012 results: 32% increase in above. Survey expanded to include members' involvement in civic issues/ commitment to community service; 72% indicated in post-service survey that they expected to volunteer in programs and activities designed to improve their community more than prior to their term of service

CAREGIVERS QUALITY OF LIFE. In 2011 ESW and Univ of WI Survey Center developed a Quality of Life survey for families/caregivers of ESW Camps participants, based on a research-based and field-tested instrument developed by U of NC to evaluate the efficacy of respite programs, measuring how respite care affects caregiver stress, health and family relationships. 2010-11 results: 63% of caregivers sought respite care outside of ESW Camps; 94% indicated difficulty finding a qualified respite provider; 58% reported it very to extremely difficult finding quality respite care. An impressive 67% indicated that ESW Camps made it possible for their loved one to live at home. 98% reported a reduction in stress as a result of service from ESW Camps. 2011-12 results: 100% indicated reduction in stress and increased quality of life as a result of participation in ESW Camps so that they continue to provide care for their family member in a community-based setting.

PROGRAM IMPACT ON YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES. 2011-12 survey: 75% of people who participated in Camp Wawbeek health education programs reported improved confidence in their self-image and abilities to adopt healthy lifestyles.

PROGRAM IMPACT ON FARMERS WITH DISABILITIES. In 2011-12 members provided outreach

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to farmers with disabilities served by the ESW FARM program to improve their access to preventative health services. Post-service survey: 70% of farmers who received FARM vocational rehabilitation services indicated increased quality of life so they could continue working, and had the knowledge to prevent further injury or secondary disabilities and chronic illness.

VETERANS FAMILY MEMBERS QUALITY OF LIFE. 2012-13 target goal: 80% of veterans' family members will indicate an increased quality of life and improved family strength as a result of attending ESW Veterans Family Camp, measured by an internal survey of veterans and family members at the end of each camp session.

EVALUATION PLAN: BUILDING ON PREVIOUS EVALUATION EFFORTS

In 2012 ESW began a partnership with a UW Professor of Special Education to provide evidence of the measurable impact of ESW Camps and the service of members and volunteers on members, beneficiaries of service, and on the community. He will assist in the design, implementation and analysis of evaluations to assess: 1) impact of the AmeriCorps experience on the career choice of former members (an initial evaluation of 5 years of past members; annually thereafter, one year post-service) 2) assess the living situations of campers and the impact of Camp on relationships in the community 3) impact of Camp on keeping campers in an inclusive, least restrictive environment, and 4) impact on system and/or policy change. In 2013-14 ESW will begin by developing an applicable instrument and conducting a survey on the impact of AmeriCorps service at ESW Camps on former member career choice.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

N/A

Continuation Changes

N/A