

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

Oregon State Service Corps (OSSC) AmeriCorps program is a statewide intermediary model administered by the Oregon Region of the American Red Cross placing individual AmeriCorps members to meet community needs throughout Oregon. 57 full-time and 6 part-time AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 4,000 volunteers to provide services around disaster preparedness and other community-determined needs to at least 35 nonprofits in Oregon. At the end of the three-year period, 60,000 residents will have received disaster preparedness skills needed to build personal and community resiliency. This project will primarily focus on the CNCS focus areas of Disaster Services, with additional focus on Capacity Building, Education, Economic Opportunity, Veterans' Services, and Healthy Futures. The CNCS investment of \$739,432 will be matched with \$744,790.

## Rationale and Approach

A) NEED: A 2012 American Red Cross (ARC) study found that nearly 80% of Oregonians have experienced between one and five emergencies/disasters firsthand, yet less than 35% of those surveyed have received first aid lessons, CPR training or have participated in disaster preparedness activities. This overall lack of preparedness coupled with the high probability of a 9.0 magnitude earthquake in the next 50 years, makes lack of disaster preparedness a significant community problem in Oregon. As a program founded to address significant community needs in disaster preparedness, education, public health and human needs, the Oregon State Service Corps (OSSC) is perfectly positioned to coordinate AmeriCorps members to provide disaster services including preparedness training to organizations lacking the resources to do so on their own. Furthermore, as the nation's premier partner in disaster response and preparedness, ARC is uniquely qualified to support this project and promote capacity building in Oregon communities.

Recognizing this preparedness problem, the Oregon ARC is spearheading Get READY!, a five-year initiative to develop, test and execute a program that will engage, educate and motivate individuals, families, schools, and businesses to take actions that will increase their level of preparedness and build resiliency in their community, thereby increasing their chance of survival after a disaster event. The 2012 research for Get READY! revealed that only 17% of Oregonians are prepared to survive on their own for 72 hours. This data supports a 2006 ARC Preparedness Survey that found that only 2 in 10 Americans feel prepared.

The significance of this lack of preparedness is amplified by the region's disaster frequency and severity. Last year alone, the Oregon ARC responded to an average of 10 disasters each week and

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assisted 668 families. Daily threats included residential fires, floods, wildfires and severe winter storms.

One example is the severe winter storm of January 2012 that resulted in widespread flooding, landslides and mudslides. More than 161 Red Cross staff members and 126 volunteers responded to the disaster and opened 11 shelters across the region. Fire is a major cause of death and destruction in Oregon. In 2011 there were 2,767 structure fires in single and multi-family homes in which 151 people were injured and 24 deaths occurred. In 2012, 700 forest fires burned about 17,000 acres of woodland while range fires burned more than 800,000 acres.

At the same time that these disasters disrupt daily life, a major threat is looming just 75 miles off the Oregon coastline. The Cascadia Subduction Zone is a massive and active geological fault that stretches 700 miles along the Pacific coast. Geologists have ranked this as the most dangerous earthquake threat facing the country, and one likely to be set off in the next 50 years. The effects of a great magnitude earthquake along this fault will be catastrophic; the Oregon ARC estimates that if a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake were to happen today, 250,000 Oregonians would be in need of shelter. FEMA research indicates that after a disaster of this magnitude, 40% of businesses are so severely impacted that they will never return.

OSSC is designed to address this life-threatening preparedness gap by targeting populations that need it most. As an intermediary organization, OSSC will strategically place 63 AmeriCorps members in sites that address important needs within the CNCS focus areas while significantly increasing disaster preparedness and resiliency. The target audience is based on two major factors: geography and population vulnerability. Geographically, some communities face different and greater risks than others. For example, coastal communities are at increased risk for flooding and tsunamis; mountain communities are at increased risk for winter storms and summer forest fires; river communities are at increased risk for flooding; communities distant from I-5 or other major roads are at increased risk for isolation in any disaster; and cities are at increased risk because of population density and crumbling buildings. The second major factor is vulnerability. ARC data shows that populations facing the greatest risk during disasters are the elderly, the young, those with physical challenges, the economically disadvantaged, and those who are not fluent in English. This vulnerability is increased due to a lack of safety nets like insurance, financial resources and/or family assistance.

The secondary focus of all OSSC placement sites is capacity building. According to the 2011 Oregon Nonprofit Sector Report, nonprofits in Oregon have seen their requests for services increase significantly in the last few years. In 2010, 51% of nonprofits had to turn away clients due to lack of resources including volunteers, staff, space, and funding. Nonprofit agencies depend on volunteers,

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and 1,200 volunteers serve as the backbone of the Oregon ARC. As an organization whose workforce is over 90% volunteers, we will utilize our volunteer engagement and management experience to enhance the placement sites' program delivery models; help them reach their service goals, and leave them with a sustained level of improved services.

B) AMERICORPS MEMBERS AS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SOLVE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS: OSSC has been a successful intermediary organization for the past 11 years, bringing AmeriCorps members to nonprofits throughout Oregon to help solve a variety of community problems. We now propose to leverage the expertise of ARC and build on this model, expanding and deepening the AmeriCorps members' impact through increasing disaster preparedness and resiliency in their local communities.

Through a competitive application process, OSSC will select at least 35 nonprofits, schools, and public agencies as placement sites for 63 AmeriCorps members. Approximately half of these placement sites will be organizations whose missions involve disaster preparedness, response planning and/or community resiliency, such as government emergency management offices, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, and commissions/associations focused on safety, preparedness and emergency management. The other placement sites will focus on areas such as economic opportunity, education, veterans' services and healthy futures.

Five OSSC members will be placed with Oregon ARC. The Youth Preparedness Coordinator will increase preparedness and resiliency among youth, including working with high school students in Red Cross Clubs to prepare their families, schools, fellow students, and communities; plan school-wide preparedness drills; and educate younger children about preparedness. The Shelter Coordinator will improve mass care capacity, including recruiting, training, and engaging volunteers in disaster sheltering, and assessing and certifying potential disaster shelters. Both of these positions will be located in Portland. In addition, three Preparedness Program Coordinators will focus on community engagement and outreach in specific communities along the coast, in the Willamette Valley and in central Oregon. These members will facilitate preparedness dialogue throughout their community, provide training, and build the capacity of the community to improve their preparedness and resiliency.

At least 50% of total MSYs will be spent in the area of disaster services. All 63 members will devote at least 20% of their time to disaster services activities, which will include: 1) guiding their placement site through the Ready Rating assessment tool to help identify placement-site specific disaster hazards, assess the site's current level of preparedness, identify areas of need and select the site's top priority for

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improving preparedness/building resiliency; 2) organizing an earthquake drill; 3) providing age-appropriate preparedness trainings to groups such as the placement site's staff, board members and other volunteers, clients and their families, and others in the community; 4) building connections between the placement site and other groups working on preparedness/resiliency; and 5) training placement site representatives as preparedness leaders so they can continue this work. 30 members placed in disaster-service related organizations will perform additional activities to increase individual and community preparedness and resiliency, which could include supporting or coordinating responses to disasters, mitigation planning, and working with service providers to advocate for people affected by disasters. The 33 members placed at non-disaster related organizations will also address the critical disparity between disaster preparedness and risk. These members will be in the unique position of having disaster preparedness knowledge, training, and ARC support and leadership. This perspective, combined with the intimate knowledge of their site and needs of the vulnerable population with which they are working, will allow them to identify the most effective methods of integrating disaster preparedness/community resiliency into their site's existing activities and structures. Through the efforts of OSSC members, 20,000 individuals will be trained in disaster preparedness, 35 organizations will complete/update their disaster plans, and 47 organizations will participate in earthquake drills (includes placement sites as well as 12 schools with Red Cross Clubs).

At least 10% of total MSYs will be spent on building organizational capacity, especially through recruiting and/or managing volunteers and designing and implementing effective volunteer management practices. Overall, members will support their placement sites to recruit, manage and train 4,000 volunteers, who will provide 20,000 hours of service, and will implement effective volunteer management practices in 35 organizations.

Members will also provide direct service in areas such as economic opportunity, education, veterans' services and healthy futures. Specific activities will include teaching financial literacy, connecting at-risk students with internship opportunities, connecting student veterans with campus and community resources, and providing individualized community integration services for people with disabilities.

As Oregon ARC prepares to significantly expand our reach through the Get READY! initiative, AmeriCorps members will help us build the capacity and community involvement/engagement needed to undertake this major, multi-year effort. Without the involvement of AmeriCorps members, Oregon ARC would not be able to reach the number of individuals and communities in Oregon who are most in need of disaster services.

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OSSC is requesting 60 MSYs, 57 full-time positions and six part-time positions. OSSC offers a small number of part-time positions in order to broaden the reach of the program to include more small organizations and members in rural areas. During our 11-year history we have received interest in these positions from both organizations and potential members, especially in small towns.

C) EVIDENCE-BASED AND EVIDENCE-INFORMED MEASUREMENTS OF IMPACT: The CNCS investment in OSSC will increase community resiliency by training 20,000 individuals in preparedness, conducting earthquake drills for 47 organizations, and assisting 35 organizations to complete/update their disaster plans. Additionally, CNCS investment will help each placement site build their capacity, expand their service goals, and leverage 4,000 volunteers. To achieve these results, OSSC has taken steps to ensure the AmeriCorps projects reflect quality program approaches and methods that are evidence- or research-based.

The model for community resiliency that drives the disaster services activities comes from a 2009 paper published in the *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*. The paper addresses the growing interest in resiliency by President Obama's Administration, as well as lively discussion regarding this issue in academic, business and governmental circles. It provides an operational framework for incorporating resiliency into our infrastructure and stresses that resiliency needs to be planned in advance--before systems are damaged.

At the national level, ARC has created a Guidebook on Creating Resilience Networks, which emphasizes that relationships are a critical component of coordinated response and a necessary precondition for a resilient community. Based on these findings, Oregon ARC is launching the Get READY! initiative to develop, test and execute a community-by-community preparedness program. Research for Get READY! found that the top two reasons why Oregonians were unprepared were "just haven't thought about it" (27.1%) and "don't think a disaster is likely" (22.4%). OSSC will bring awareness and education about disasters to the community, thus removing the two most common barriers to preparedness.

The Ready Rating program, to be used by all OSSC members, is designed to help organizations prepare for emergencies. The 123-point Ready Rating Assessment tool and Ready Rating Program Guide are the result of a comprehensive review of preparedness recommendations conducted by the ARC National Office of Preparedness and Health and Safety Services, the national Ready Rating team, and the ARC Scientific Advisory Council. All Ready Rating program steps and recommendations are grounded in scientific research, best practices and/or expert opinion from respected professionals representing multiple disciplines and perspectives. To date, more than 1,300

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organizations and 400 schools have conducted Ready Ratings; three-quarters of those organizations have updated their plans; and 70% of those organizations have educated their employees about preparedness. Once an organization completes the Ready Rating disaster assessment, they have access to a suite of tools to help them improve their rating, including how to create an action plan for before, during, and after emergencies.

A major goal of OSSC is to change behaviors to improve awareness of and preparedness for disasters, thus increasing resiliency. At the end of the three-year grant cycle, all 35 placement sites will have conducted Ready Ratings and updated them annually, and will have prepared or updated their disaster plans. The Oregon ARC can access the Ready Rating system to verify who has taken these actions.

In addition to conducting Ready Ratings, AmeriCorps members (and the volunteers they leverage) will train an anticipated 20,000 Oregonians in disaster preparedness-- including placement site employees, volunteers, and clients, as well as members of their communities. Our goal is that 90 percent of preparedness presentation attendees demonstrate increased knowledge of disaster preparedness. This will be measured by a pre and post survey administered prior to or at the very beginning of the presentation and again immediately following the presentation. We will also follow up after three months to see if the change in knowledge has been sustained, and at what level. In addition, we will evaluate our impact by measuring the percent of attendees who have taken between one and five of the most common steps necessary to prepare themselves and their families, such as building a 72 hour kit and becoming certified in CPR/First Aid, in the three months following the presentation. Our goal for this initial year is that 50 percent of attendees will have taken at least one significant preparedness action. We will then analyze what factors made attendees take action in order to improve our preparedness training and increase our impact. These performance measure targets are based on past experience and the expertise of the Program Director and Directors of Preparedness and Resiliency.

Members at sites providing services in non-disaster-related areas will measure results based on evidence-based criteria for their subject areas, and OSSC will report these results quarterly to OregonVolunteers.

OSSC's capacity-building impact will be measured by the number of volunteers managed or recruited by the members and the number of hours of service these volunteers provide. Our target of 4,000 volunteers (3,500 volunteers managed and 500 additional volunteers recruited), providing 20,000 hours of service is based on past levels of achievement. In 2010, 63 members managed 3,108

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volunteers, and in 2011, 63 members managed 3,087 volunteers. With a stronger focus on volunteer management in 2012, 35 members managed 1,075 volunteers in the first quarter of the program year. The year-end goal is 3,000 volunteers. The 4,000 target takes into account the increase of members from 35 to 63, as well as an increased focus on members recruiting and managing volunteers for National Service Days.

In previous years, OSSC has been successful in reaching performance targets. For example, last year OSSC members reached 2,541 people through preparedness training, exceeding the 1,500 goal. Additionally, members exceeded their capacity-building resources goal by creating 173 resources, compared to the projected 150. As of the first quarter progress report for the current program year, 3,383 people had received disaster training (towards an annual target of 7,000) and 1,075 volunteers were managed (towards an annual target of 3,000).

D) MEMBER RECRUITMENT: Given OSSC's intermediary model, the placement sites handle much of the recruitment process. To ensure AmeriCorps members are able to achieve OSSC objectives, the Field Specialists will provide placement sites with technical assistance throughout the recruitment process. For example, the Field Specialists will encourage sites to recruit members using local agency websites, outside websites such as craigslist, college and university career centers, local newspapers, libraries, and other job posting sites. They will also post all recruitment information on the My AmeriCorps website. The OSSC website includes all the position descriptions and how to apply. These positions follow all Equal Opportunity criteria, a fact that is advertised on each position description, announcement and website.

To achieve the objective of increasing preparedness and resiliency, the Field Specialists' goal is to support placement sites to recruit local members who understand the target population and disaster risks of the community. Field Specialists will ask current members to promote the program in local communities where they serve and will ask them to recommend people within the community who would make good applicants. Additionally, when targeting candidates in rural communities, OSSC will suggest that sites post position notices on community bulletin boards, grocery stores, restaurants and libraries.

OSSC will also ask sites to recruit candidates from underrepresented populations. In Oregon, where the ethnic minority population is 21.8% of the total population, OSSC suggests sites also focus on more than communities of color and language, but also include the disadvantaged, disabled, and other groups who are historically underrepresented. OSSC has a history of working with underrepresented populations by selecting placement sites that serve them: NARA, which serves the Native American

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community, Southern Oregon ESD that serves migrant farm workers, Exceed Enterprises that serves the disabled, and Lincoln County School District that serves the homeless.

During this recruitment phase, placement sites collect all applications, select and interview applicants, and then select their top candidates. OSSC provides recommendations to sites about conducting behavioral interviews in which candidates are asked to describe personal experiences they have had with underserved populations and how they handled and learned from those experiences. Once a site has selected the top candidate, a Field Specialist reviews the candidate's application for AmeriCorps eligibility and strength in five areas: motivation and commitment, flexibility and responsibility, interpersonal skills, productive capacity and related volunteer-work experience. A Field Specialist then conducts a 30-minute phone interview in which s/he assesses the candidate's motivation, desire to fulfill roles and responsibilities, and ability to complete the long-term commitment.

After the site and OSSC agree that the candidate is appropriate, a National Sex Offender Public Registry check is done and the candidate completes all necessary paperwork. Then the Field Specialist makes a formal offer. When the candidate accepts the position and completes the Member Service Agreement, OSSC establishes the payroll procedure, and begins a state and national criminal background check.

E) MEMBER TRAINING: All OSSC members participate in a three-day orientation during their first week of service that includes an introduction to AmeriCorps and the ARC, including stories about AmeriCorps experiences from a panel of alumni. The AmeriCorps handbook is carefully reviewed; members learn about prohibited activities; and they are introduced to and trained in development of their personalized, year-long service action plan. Members will also learn to conduct Ready Rating assessments; conduct and assess an earthquake simulation event; and learn how to give age-appropriate disaster preparedness presentations. Members will also be trained in networking, effective communication, and volunteer management to help them meet the OSSC goal of capacity building. They are also oriented to think about their required Sustainability Projects that are designed to sustain the work that the member has been doing after the member's service ends at the site.

OregonVolunteers hosts a day-long AmeriCorps Kick-Off in early October for all AmeriCorps and VISTA members throughout the state. During their first quarter, all members will also participate in Red Cross disaster trainings and members who are not already certified will become certified in first aid, CPR and AED. OSSC hosts quarterly meetings where members receive additional training on topics such as Anti-bias, Effective Communication and Transitioning to Leadership.

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In addition to OSSC and ARC training, each site trains their members in skills specific to their site. For example, last year the Lincoln County School District HELP Program trained their three OSSC members in understanding the definition of homeless youth, national and local statistics and local services available. On the site application, sites must provide a general outline of their orientation plan for the member, including an orientation to the organization, the member's project, the issue the member will be addressing, and the community they will be serving. The site also provides at least two formal skills trainings they indicated on the site application.

Every contact between OSSC and members, whether one-on-one or in groups, allows time for each member to reflect on his/her role. OSSC, the member, and the site supervisor all have the responsibility to ensure that the member is not requested to and does not take part in any prohibited activity. This is monitored through the member's action plan, as well as through the regularly scheduled calls and face-to-face meetings between OSSC staff, the site supervisor and the member.

Prohibited activities are also monitored at quarterly meetings and through monthly activity reports. Members who have questions about assigned tasks are encouraged to contact OSSC staff. If an issue arises, it is addressed quickly with both the site supervisor and the member. To ensure that generated volunteers are aware of and adhere to the rules regarding prohibited activities, this will be an important topic during members' volunteer management training.

F) MEMBER SUPERVISION: Each placement site assigns a supervisor to each OSSC member. The OSSC Program Director has created a detailed plan for supporting supervisors that includes sending monthly emails to new and experienced supervisors listing time-sensitive tasks such as signing off on member reports and participating in site visits. It is the role of the supervisor to carefully follow the member's service action plan to ensure that each member achieves core competencies relating to AmeriCorps affiliation, program orientation, effective communication, volunteer recruitment and management, cultural competency, service project planning and orienting the member to life after AmeriCorps. Site supervisors must also sign off on or complete all required reports including a Member Final Evaluation Form. The OSSC Program Director makes individual monthly calls to new site supervisors for (at least) the first quarter. Experienced supervisors are called quarterly; new supervisors will also be called quarterly if all is going well after the first quarter. In addition to other responsibilities that are clearly defined in the OSSC Supervisor's Handbook, each supervisor is responsible for checking the progress his/her member is making on performance measures and for providing at least two written evaluations of his/her member during the placement year.

The Program Director selects the supervisor based on the site's recommendation and after

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evaluating the candidate's resume. Supervisors include school principals, executive directors, and program managers. Non-Oregon ARC members will have a dotted-line-relationship to Oregon ARC staff to ensure they have adequate support for their disaster services activities.

The OSSC Program Director trains all supervisors at a one-day meeting prior to the start of the program year, which includes a pre-test and post-test. These assessments help OSSC better plan supervisor training and monitoring by proactively highlighting areas of supervision that may need more attention during the program year. OSSC provides each site supervisor with an electronic copy of the Site Supervisor Handbook detailing all aspects of member oversight. Site supervisors can contact OSSC staff at any time for support, help in solving problems or for simple encouragement. When a problem arises it is identified and acted upon quickly. If a site visit is deemed necessary, it is made immediately. In addition to supervisor oversight, checks and balances are in place to ensure members are fulfilling their set goals. For example, OSSC Field Specialists conduct regular phone calls and emails with members and assess their progress through member satisfaction surveys, quarterly check-ins, regional meetings and biannual site visits.

OSSC will not have members tutoring as a part of this grant.

G) MEMBER EXPERIENCE: OSSC gives its members a powerful service experience that produces community impact and leads to continued civic participation and connectivity with other AmeriCorps members. Reports from the past 11 years reveal powerful experiences members had at their placement sites. OSSC also requires all members to lead community service projects outside their sites on National Service Days. Quarterly meetings reinforce the OSSC goal of ensuring that each member has a positive experience, and they build a close camaraderie amongst members as they see how each of their member roles impacts their respective communities.

Members provide a lasting impact on the community through the work at their host site and the required disaster service and capacity building components that lead to increased preparedness/resiliency. At the end of the year, the data gathered from the members' activities in Ready Rating, earthquake drills, network development, preparedness presentations, as well as their capacity building work, will help every member feel a new level of satisfaction as they see that their service has moved their placement sites to a new level of preparedness.

Additionally, members have structured time for reflection and a chance to share with their colleagues at the six annual group meetings. The action plan created by each member is one of the tools that will be used for this formal reflection, and the Program Director and Field Specialists provide tips for productive reflection.

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OSSC will ensure AmeriCorps members are easily identifiable by donning official AmeriCorps gear including a t-shirt, sweatshirt and pins. Site supervisors and members will be trained in the importance of identifying with AmeriCorps. Members' office space will be identified with appropriate signage; all members will have AmeriCorps business cards; and all members will use the AmeriCorps logo as part of their email signature.

To ensure connectivity, OSSC members have a members' only Google Group and a Facebook group that enables members and alums to easily keep in touch with one another. Members also have contact information for all members and attend OregonVolunteers events with other AmeriCorps and VISTA members in the state. After the member's term is complete, OSSC fosters a continued connection to AmeriCorps members by communicating with them and inviting them to serve on advisory committees.

H) VOLUNTEER GENERATION: OSSC members will each implement three or more effective volunteer management practices, and altogether they will manage 3,500 volunteers and recruit 500 additional volunteers. Some examples of effective practices include developing a written volunteer generation plan; creating a volunteer manual; screening and matching volunteers to specific jobs; recognition activities for volunteers; annual measurement of volunteer impact and training and professional development for volunteers. An example of successful practices from 2011-12 includes the successful creation of a Volunteer Training Manual for the Salem Family Literacy Program.

Each organization will set goals for the types of volunteers they need. Some volunteers will be episodic, for example, to teach a class in resume writing in a program that supports economic opportunities. Other volunteers will be long-term and might become disaster preparedness presenters. The role of the member in recruiting, training, and managing volunteers is specified during the placement site application process and documented in the member's action plan. All members will strive to leverage as many high-quality volunteers as possible and ensure these volunteers are satisfied with their experience and likely to return. Members will perform activities such as having a volunteer recruitment table at a community meeting; assisting volunteers to complete application materials; and providing training for volunteers. Any member who recruits, trains, or manages even one volunteer during any month of service is required to submit a Volunteer Tracking Form.

OSSC spends significant time training members and placement sites about appropriate roles for volunteers who work with AmeriCorps members. Prohibited activities are reviewed at every meeting, in every report, and in communication between members and OSSC staff.

I) ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION: OSSC is strongly

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committed to supporting the AmeriCorps brand. The site application, final contracts between OSSC and the site, and training for supervisors and members all include information about the brand identification and require all members to adhere by these standards. All members take the History of AmeriCorps training at Orientation and agree to wear at least one item of their AmeriCorps gear on a daily basis. All placement sites must mention OSSC and AmeriCorps in any publicity or exposure it gives to the service in which an AmeriCorps member is engaged, including news stories, website listings of programs and media interviews. The OSSC contract with placement sites also requests that each site post an AmeriCorps sign in a visible location within the agency. The sites also agree to let OSSC promote the service of AmeriCorps members, and that OSSC is free to mention the agency in news stories related to the AmeriCorps program. OSSC will provide the AmeriCorps logo and the OSSC logo for placement on the business cards an agency prints for its member/s.

### Organizational Capability

A) ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING: For 11 years, OSSC has built capacity among Oregon nonprofits to address significant community needs by placing AmeriCorps members at organizations throughout the state. We have extended the reach and impact of national service to organizations -- and their clients -- who would not otherwise be able to benefit from the AmeriCorps program due to limited organizational capacity. We are now ready to expand on this success and, leveraging the disaster preparedness expertise and resources of the ARC, incorporate a strong focus on disaster services into our model.

OSSC will be staffed by: 1) Program Director Mark Johnson, a former AmeriCorps member who has worked with OSSC for 11 years. He oversees the selection of placement sites; provides supervision and support to the sites and site supervisors; and manages grant budgeting, reporting and compliance.

2) Two Field Specialists, who will provide ongoing support and oversight for members, including ensuring completion of reports and records; building morale; and facilitating teamwork among members. One of these positions will be filled by Matt Honore, a former AmeriCorps member who has worked as a Field Specialist with OSSC since 2009. The second position is expected to be filled by Nicole Isaakson, who was a Field Specialist with OSSC in 2011-2012. M. Johnson and OSSC will be overseen by Oregon ARC Chief Operating Officer (COO) Eric Corliss, who provides supervision for all director-level program staff in the state; handles budgeting, expense reporting, and contract revenue; oversees facilities; and serves as a liaison with the national HR and Finance staff.

Red Cross employees with experience and expertise in federal grant reporting and compliance, financial budgeting and reporting, and human resources provide financial and programmatic

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orientation for OSSC staff. These employees, as well as those with experience in disaster preparedness, are available for ongoing technical assistance. The OSSC Program Director keeps these staff abreast of any changes to the AmeriCorps Provisions or other regulations affecting AmeriCorps compliance. The OSSC Program Director also orients and trains placement site supervisors. After an initial full-day orientation, he communicates with them at least monthly, and is available to provide support or technical assistance at any time. OSSC has also developed a Site Supervisor Handbook which provides site supervisors with comprehensive information on OSSC, AmeriCorps/CNCS, member requirements, reporting, prohibited activities, etc.; the handbook is regularly updated and refined based on supervisor and OSSC staff feedback and to incorporate any updates to requirements, reports, etc. A recent survey of site supervisors showed a satisfaction level of between 97-100 percent for the various components of the orientation.

In providing training and skills development for members, OSSC will leverage the extensive ARC experience in developing and delivering disaster-related training and will draw from the wide variety of existing Red Cross trainings. OSSC's successful training program includes an initial three-day orientation, a member handbook, participation in a statewide AmeriCorps kick-off event, quarterly in-person meetings, and involvement of AmeriCorps alumni in training. The orientation and member support receive consistently high scores on surveys of members and site supervisors.

Oregon ARC has extensive experience in successfully completing evaluation tools and providing information and support as part of evaluation efforts. This includes participating in national Red Cross systems measuring the satisfaction of ARC clients and the outcomes of our programs, and holding After-Action Reviews after each large disaster. Oregon ARC also has experience managing contractors to perform a variety of functions including strategic planning and evaluation. OSSC has solicited input from external evaluators including SuccessLinks, LLC and Education Northwest to inform their evaluation design.

OSSC and the Oregon ARC have successfully administered more than \$13 million in government funds, including more than \$6 million for OSSC, over the past 11 years. Other federal awards include the Clara Barton VISTA Corps through CNCS and a Fire Prevention and Safety grant through FEMA.

Oregon ARC provides services across the state through 57 employees and more than 1,200 volunteers. CEO Maree Wacker, who has over 20 years' experience in nonprofit management and fundraising, including nearly eight at the Red Cross, directs the Region. An 18-member Board of Directors focuses on fundraising and building community partnerships and awareness of all ARC programs, including OSSC. COO Eric Corliss will directly supervise and support the OSSC Director,

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spending 5% of his time on OSSC-related work. Director of Preparedness Francisco Ianni, Director of Community Resiliency Ronda Kennedy Clegg, and Director of Response and Recovery Cara Sloman will provide oversight of OSSC disaster services activities; they will each devote 5% of their time to OSSC-related work. A team of eight Readiness Specialists, positioned throughout the state, will provide direct support for the members. Oregon ARC's Development Department will raise funds to support OSSC as well as providing grant writing assistance.

OSSC has a successful track record of program management, including meeting performance targets, complying with requests, and completing all requirements. In 2011-2012 we exceeded all performance targets and are currently on track to meet or exceed all 2012-2013 targets. All program and fiscal monitoring by OregonVolunteers during our 11 years have resulted in no material findings. B) SUSTAINABILITY: Oregon ARC has successfully sustained OSSC for 11 years. We work closely with the placement sites to ensure sustainability using a rigorous evaluation system to assess potential placement sites and requiring each applicant to clearly describe how the member's service will move the organization toward greater local impact and sustainability. The tiered/sliding scale cash-match system, which requires a higher cash match the longer a placement site participates in OSSC, encourages sites to plan for and achieve sustainability of the member's activities and impact. A number of placement sites have transitioned their AmeriCorps positions to paid positions, including two in the last year.

Oregon ARC has a long history of successful fundraising to support service activities; last year we raised \$3.8 million through federated/United Way; contributions from individuals, companies, and foundations; and special events. We also have a successful history of securing government contracts to support specific programs, such as Meals on Wheels and Transportation services for seniors and disabled citizens. Throughout the country, ARC is investing in building its fundraising capacity, with a goal of more than doubling the amount we raise in five years.

The members' work around disaster planning and capacity-building through volunteer management at their placement sites and throughout the community will also help create sustainable nonprofits and services in the long term. Many small nonprofits or programs have not had the resources to develop emergency or succession plans, putting their services at risk in a variety of situations, from the illness of a key employee to a power outage. By helping these organizations develop a disaster plan, members will ensure the resiliency of the vital services they provide in a major disaster such as an earthquake as well as in smaller emergencies.

The chief community stakeholders for this project are the placement sites and organizations whose

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missions are related to disaster preparedness and response. Anticipated placement sites include organizations serving ethnically diverse populations, hunger-related organizations, educational institutions, social service nonprofits, and groups serving people with disabilities.

As we expand the disaster services focus of the project, we will target disaster-related organizations as placement sites. Possible sites include Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission, Oregon Emergency Management Association, Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization, County Emergency Management offices, Oregon Department of Health Services, and Oregon Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.

OSSC's advisory committee, made up of current and former AmeriCorps members as well as other community members around the state, helps recruit strong placement sites and enables OSSC to select positions with sites that show clear community-determined needs, strong organizational capacity and a solid plan for sustainability.

Placement sites are also involved in program planning and implementation through an annual survey. OSSC staff reviews feedback from this survey in order to make adjustments to trainings and site support systems.

C) COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: OSSC has thorough plans to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations. The Oregon ARC participates in an annual A-133 audit, as well as hosting an annual Commission site visit of the AmeriCorps program. No material findings have been found in past A-133 audits. OSSC has a 100% on-time track record for all required OregonVolunteers reports, documents and other requested information.

In its role as intermediary, OSSC constantly monitors the placement sites for compliance during scheduled site visits as well as through a careful review of the applications and the member service action plans. OSSC also administers surveys, carefully reviews member reports, and communicates regularly with members, supervisors and other contacts to make sure that the site is in compliance with prohibited activities rules and other boundaries expected of an AmeriCorps member and placement.

The site application and the Supervisor's Handbook clearly list all prohibited activities. The OSSC Program Director reviews these activities, as well as other rules and regulations, with all members and supervisors. If OSSC staff believes a site might be moving into non-compliance, s/he immediately contacts the site supervisor to obtain more facts. For example, OSSC staff would investigate further after seeing from a survey or site visit that the member is performing a significant amount of general administrative work or activities that were not included in the original position description. If the

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action can be corrected, OSSC staff works with the organization to ensure that they become compliant. This can include a site visit to develop an action plan, or revision of member service duties. If a site is non-compliant and refuses to cooperate, it will be dropped from the program.

Because the placement sites are located throughout the state, and because the services provided by these organizations vary widely, OSSC staff takes special precautions to ensure compliance. This begins with the site selection process; applicants are carefully considered for their potential to have problems in terms of prohibited activities or with other compliance issues. We also stay in close and frequent contact with site supervisors and members via phone and email to make sure we are aware of all the activities in which members are engaged.

Current placement sites interested in returning include Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO), Impact Northwest, Exceed Enterprises, Inc., Hillsboro School District, OSU Extension Service (Columbia County), Youth Contact, History Museum of Hood River County, City of Corvallis Parks and Recreation, Corvallis School District, Marion-Polk Food Share, University of Oregon Veteran's Program, Willamette Farm and Food Coalition, and Lincoln County School District HELP program.

These organizations -- and any others who are interested - will submit formal applications in late spring. OSSC staff and members of a review committee evaluate the applications based on criteria such as ability to pay cash match; alignment of services with OSSC and CNCS focus areas; quality of project; capacity to supervise, train, and support member; sustainability; and whether the proposed service is measurable and performance targets are significant but realistic. Applicants will be notified of the results in June.

No compliance issues were identified during the 2011--2012 year, through both the Commission site visit and the A-133 audit. OSSC was included as part of a recent Office of the Inspector General (OIG) audit of OregonVolunteers and its subgrantees (of which we are one). OSSC will receive a final report regarding this audit's findings by February 15, 2013.

OSSC has had 100% AmeriCorps enrollment every year of operation. Member retention is usually close to 100%; if a vacancy occurs early in the program year we attempt to fill the position quickly. In 2011-12 our member retention was 96.8%. Two members left during the year. OSSC will survey current members to determine how we can further maximize member satisfaction in the coming year, and will review recruitment materials and processes to identify ways to further emphasize and clarify the living allowance provided and time commitment required of a member.

### **Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy**

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A) COST EFFECTIVENESS: OSSC provides a cost-effective approach to addressing the lack of preparedness and the need for capacity building among Oregon nonprofits, especially small local community organizations. OSSC manages grant application, reporting, and compliance tasks as well as many of the activities related to recruitment, training, and support of the members placed at 35 organizations throughout Oregon. On their own, these organizations would not have the resources or capacity to apply for and manage an AmeriCorps program/member. Through OSSC's efficient intermediary model, numerous organizations are able to benefit from the AmeriCorps program. This approach, with individual members placed at a variety of organizations, also achieves broad impact across multiple focus areas while providing members with the support and resources of a larger program and team.

As part of the ARC, OSSC is able to take advantage of the cost efficiencies secured by such a large national organization in areas such as human resources, finance and accounting, technology and facilities. We also have access to disaster preparedness resources such as training, expertise, and materials that have been developed based on extensive experience and research by ARC and its partners in emergency management. OSSC and its members will also be connected to Get READY!, Oregon ARC's major statewide initiative, and will benefit from the significant investment the organization will be making in this effort through a variety of resources.

Other criteria that make OSSC's approach cost-effective include: sharing training costs with other AmeriCorps programs; making extensive use of donated space and presenter time for trainings and meetings; encouraging members to carpool to regional meetings/trainings and otherwise share travel costs; and leveraging the statewide resources of Oregon ARC, including 14 offices around the state.

Investing in preparedness prior to a major disaster is a cost-effective approach to strengthening the resiliency of our citizens, businesses, and communities. Based on the experience of Japan during the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami - where the high level of preparedness likely saved more than 300,000 lives - we know that the better prepared we are ahead of time, the more likely we are to survive the disaster, and the more quickly we can begin to recover and rebuild. Improving community resilience and preparedness can greatly lessen the costs and negative effects of disasters of all sizes. The World Bank estimates that on average countries save \$7 in response for each \$1 in preparedness costs; FEMA estimates \$4 for every \$1 is saved. This CNCS investment of \$739,432 and matching funds of \$744,790 will save the nation at least \$6 million in the event of a disaster.

With an increase in the amount of member service hours focused on improving preparedness and resiliency, this project will yield a deeper impact and broader reach. We will significantly expand the

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impact of AmeriCorps members on disaster services from 7,000 this year (with 35 MSYs) to 20,000 (with 60 MSYs), and will broaden the reach of the program to include new types of placement sites. We will accomplish this without a commensurate increase in federal funds from prior years when we received AmeriCorps\*State competitive funding.

At \$12,324, our cost per MSY does not exceed the maximum of \$13,300. This year's higher cost per MSY (current year is \$11,461) is a result of increased program evaluation costs due to updated guidance from CNCS. An evaluation that uses an experimental or quasi-experimental design and has a comparison or control group is budgeted at \$75,000. This higher cost will be shared by the placement sites and the Oregon ARC. Placement sites will pay a higher cash match and in-kind support and Oregon ARC will increase fundraising efforts on behalf of OSSC.

Oregon ARC's major sources of funding are contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations; United Way/Federated allocations and designations; special events; legacies and bequests and government contracts. OSSC's budget of \$1,484,222 represents 22% of the Oregon ARC's \$6.8 million estimated annual budget for FY14.

For the 2012--2013 year, OSSC is receiving \$401,127 in AmeriCorps\*State formula funds. In the five prior years, OSSC received between \$600,522 and \$744,584 annually in AmeriCorps\*State competitive funds. In addition, due to the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, Oregon ARC also received \$317,815 of CNCS funds in 2009-2010 to implement a one-year program called the Oregon Community Action Corps.

This proposal requires additional funding of \$744,790 to support the project, which will come from cash and in-kind matches from the placement sites as well as the commitment from Oregon ARC of staff time and other support. Placement sites pay cash matches calculated using a graduated scale, with new sites paying a lower fee than returning sites. For full-time members, new sites will pay \$8,600, second and third year sites will pay \$8,900, and fourth year and beyond sites will pay \$9,200. Sites with part-time members will pay \$4,600. Each placement site also provides workspace resources valued at \$2,300 per member. This includes office space, desk, and equipment such as a computer and phone and is documented through sites completing an In-Kind Form that requires back up (such as a lease agreement) showing their calculations. Placement sites also provide other support for their members, including supervision, training, travel reimbursement, supplies, and outreach expenses -- further leveraging the federal dollars for this project.

The OSSC Program Director has discussed this proposal -- including the expanded focus on disaster services -- with all our current placement sites and a number of past sites. We have already secured

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the commitment of 13 of these organizations to apply to return as placement sites. We have also compiled an extensive list of disaster-related organizations that we think will be interested in this opportunity. Nearly all of them are current ARC partners, so we are familiar with their priorities and resources and how an AmeriCorps member could expand the impact of their services, build the capacity of their organization, and increase personal and community resiliency.

As OSSC expands and intensifies its disaster services impact, Oregon ARC is committed to ensuring that OSSC members have the training, supervision, and support needed to successfully increase the preparedness and resiliency of their placement sites and affiliated individuals (staff, volunteers, clients), as well as of the broader community. Thus we will ramp up our investment in the program in terms of staff time; travel; and materials for preparedness presentations, earthquake drills, and other activities. This investment will be supported by the fundraising efforts of the ten-member Development team, who solicit funds from individual and corporate donors and foundations, and organize six fundraising events throughout the state. This revenue mainly funds disaster response and preparedness services, and OSSC's work is a key component of Oregon ARC's preparedness efforts. The Development team is currently developing a strategic fundraising case and plan for the major statewide Get READY! initiative, and will integrate the work of OSSC and its members into these.

B) BUDGET ADEQUACY: The proposed budget adequately supports our program design, including an expanded focus on disaster services and a program evaluation plan meeting CNCS guidelines. The budget includes stipend, FICA, health care, and worker's compensation for 57 full-time and six part-time members as well as the salaries, benefits, and related expenses for the three full-time staff (Program Director and two Field Specialists) sufficient to support those 63 members. Travel costs are appropriate for an intermediary program in which members are placed at 35 organizations located throughout the state, and include expenses for site visits by OSSC staff, joint meetings and trainings attended by all members, site supervisor training, and site recruitment. Costs for criminal background and FBI checks are included. Other expenses integral to the success of the program include member gear, office supplies, staff and member training, rent, phone, postage, the OnCorps online member reporting system, and member workspaces.

The significant program evaluation expense of \$75,000 reflects the updated CNCS guidance requiring an evaluation that uses an experimental or quasi-experimental design and has a comparison or control group to isolate the program's impact. This expense represents 5% of the total program budget, which is in line with feedback from Oregon Volunteers and program evaluation experts. For example, according to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook, an evaluation generally

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costs between 5 and 7 percent of a project's total budget.

Program expenses are shared between CNCS (50%) and Oregon ARC and the placement sites (50%). Placement sites provide a cash match as well as in-kind support, and Oregon ARC provides in-kind support in the form of management/supervision, grant writing and fundraising, administration, finance and accounting, and human resource functions as well as training, travel, and preparedness materials.

### **Evaluation Summary or Plan**

OSSC will contract with an external evaluator to design an experimental or quasi-experimental design for a program evaluation. \$75,000 has been added to our program budget for this purpose. This represents 5% of our total budget and is based on feedback from both OregonVolunteers and grantwriting organizations. A previous external program evaluation report is being sent directly to CNCS, as guidelines request.

### **Amendment Justification**

N/A

### **Clarification Summary**

N/A

### **Continuation Changes**

N/A