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Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

78 AmeriCorps members will leverage up to 1,170 parent volunteers in the communities of Dallas, Irving, Richardson, Houston, Jacksonville, Longview, Odessa, Amarillo, Rio Grande Valley and Corpus Christi. This project will focus on the CNCS focus area of Education and will result in parents being more involved in their children's education and children being prepared for school. The CNCS investment of \$467,576 will be matched with \$985,225 from UNT and the communities being served.

Rationale and Approach

SUMMARY: Successful and proven programs that work with parents to prepare their children for school are needed in Texas. HIPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) provides economically disadvantaged parents with the support, skills and materials needed to get their 3, 4, and 5 year-old children ready for school, and for parents to become engaged in their child's school as a supporter and volunteer both parent involvement and school readiness are proven to increase a child's success in school. We request continuation of the HIPYCorps program model in four communities, expansion into six additional communities, and to deepen our impact by focusing additional efforts in strengthening the quality of parent meetings. Seventy eight members will be recruited from the communities being served to provide parents with weekly home visits, using a research proven curriculum, and will organize monthly parent meetings in the community. Members are needed to mobilize parents from those we serve, to those who serve; by overlaying the AmeriCorps ethic of service onto the HIPY model of school readiness and parent involvement. This evidence based approach will have a measurable impact, and data will be collected on both parent involvement and school readiness in children, using standardized, nationally normed assessments, as well as process data on family enrollment, participation and completion of the 30 weeks, using program developed forms and an online system. In 11-12 HIPY children (86%) were deemed "ready for school" by their Kindergarten teachers, and their parents were found to significantly increase the amount of time they spent engaging their children in educational activities at home. Parents were also found to increase their engagement with their child's school by interacting with the teacher, volunteering and communicating regularly with school staff. Members are recruited from the pool of participating parents and are supervised, trained and supported by program coordinators. Both members and

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coordinator costs are borne by partnering agencies who implement the HIPPY model. Texas HIPPY boasts high member enrollment (100%) and retention (95-97%). This is possible, despite the fact they often face many of the same risk factors as the community being served (poverty, limited formal education, limited English), because of the extensive support, training and supervision provided not only by the site coordinators, but by Texas HIPPY staff. In the last grant period we accomplished the development of an extensive training curriculum, which coordinators deliver to home visitors, into which we've incorporated an online assessment system to ensure that members are receiving and understanding the content being provided. With this request, we plan to broaden the scope of this online / training resource to focus on providing sites with resources, training and materials to incorporate a civic engagement curriculum into the monthly parent meetings. Our end goal is to increase the quality of the service / volunteer experience for parents, and to introduce young children to the concept of service. This will generate volunteerism in the short term, and change lives in the long term. Our organization, and host / partnering organizations are committed to the AmeriCorps identity and philosophy. By partnering with school districts and established non-profit organizations across the state, we ensure the organizational capability, accountability, compliance, staffing and matching funding that AmeriCorps requires. Ultimately, these partnerships also enhances the sustainability of the project, increases the possibilities of expansion, and ensures cost effectiveness of the project by having partnering agencies bear the bulk of the cost of implementing HIPPY and using AmeriCorps funding to integrate the AmeriCorps ethic of service into the HIPPY model of school readiness.

COMPELLING NEED Successful and proven programs that work with parents to prepare their children for school are needed in Texas. HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) provides economically disadvantaged parents with the support, skills and materials needed to get their 3, 4, and 5 year-old children ready for school. This evidence based program model has ensured that over 20,000 Texas children have entered Kindergarten with basic skills needed to succeed in school. This impact was described by one of our HIPPYCorps members, Erika A., who related her experiences with a mom who could not read when she started in HIPPY. Despite this limitation, the parent showed a great willingness to learn how to read so she could work with her child, "At first, she felt too afraid to try to give the lesson to her child but she practiced learning new words each week. I am very proud to see how she has overcome her fear; she can now read and understand." This mom's experience in HIPPY reflects overwhelming scientific evidence on the

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effectiveness of parent involvement for school-readiness. During the early years, a child's interaction with others through learning opportunities with a caring adult is paramount to the brain's "wiring" itself (Blakemore and Frith, 2005). In HIPPY, that key adult is the parent, and with information, concrete instruction, and support, the parent is the best person to prepare the child for school. HIPPYCorps addresses the need for school-readiness by teaching parents to work with their own children on daily in-home school-readiness activities. This results in parents who are more involved in their child's education at home, and ultimately in the school as volunteers and advocates for their child's education.

CONTINUATION AND EXPANSION NEED: We request continuation of the HIPPYCorps program model in four communities (Houston, Dallas, Irving, and Richardson) that have demonstrated success in integrating HIPPY and AmeriCorps for over 10 years. These partner organizations (Independent School Districts, or ISDs) fund the majority of program costs, including the costs of the full time site coordinators and AmeriCorps member/home visitors. The ISDs have identified areas of their community in which parent involvement and school-readiness are sorely needed. They underwent an extensive research and application process with HIPPY USA (the national office) beginning with identification of community needs, based on indicators such as low test scores (Dallas, Irving, Houston), poverty (all sites), low literacy of parents (Richardson, Dallas), lack of parental involvement (all sites) and parents with limited English skills (all sites). Partner organizations have identified specific schools/communities to target based on the following measures: Dallas and Houston ISD selected schools with the lowest standardized scores and low income schools (Title I) for HIPPY; Irving ISD implemented HIPPY in early childhood centers where children are eligible based on income and limited English proficiency; and, Richardson ISD targets schools with highest poverty and limited English populations. Most HIPPY children (89%) are economically disadvantaged according to school district standards for free and reduced lunch. Under this grant, these four existing programs will continue to provide families with much needed services, but will also provide mentorship, share best practices and provide statewide leadership for HIPPY and AmeriCorps to succeed in six expansion sites. After all, the need in Texas is much greater than these four communities, and we are fortunate to have the opportunity to replicate the HIPPYCorps model in an additional 6 communities through a partnership with HHSC (Health and Human Services). HHSC TX secured MIECHV (Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting) program funding to provide home visitation services to Texas communities with demonstrated highest risk. HHSC identified

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research-based program models which would be funded to address these risks. HIPY was one of four program models to be selected, and one of two to be selected for all six of the communities. This selection was based on HIPY's statistically proven positive outcomes as reported in peer reviewed journals, including two randomized control trials (Baker, Piotrkowski, & Brooks-Gun (1998); Necochea (2007)). The communities were selected for MIECHV funding due to high rates of poverty, pre-term birth, juvenile crime, family violence, school drop-out, unemployment, child maltreatment, and substance abuse. County averages were compared to the statewide average and the following seven counties were selected for expansion funding: Potter (Amarillo), Ector (Odessa), Nueces (Corpus Christi), Willacy in the Rio Grande Valley, Gregg (Longview), Cherokee (Jacksonville/Palestine) and Dallas County (which has an existing HIPY program that was funded for expansion). According to HHSC data, 21-45% of children in these communities live in poverty (highest in Willacy/Hidalgo Counties), and 20-38% of families indicate they have inadequate social support (highest in Ector Counties). MIECHV funding provides these communities with not only monies to implement HIPY, but a continuum of home visiting beginning prenatally, and funds to integrate home visiting services into a community-wide early childhood education network.

In addition to expanding the number of communities, parents and members, we also proposed to deepen our impact by focusing additional efforts on raising the quality of parent meetings. Currently the HIPY model specifies the number and structure of parent meetings but not the content. With this funding, we will improve the quality of both parent education and enrichment provided to children while parents are at the meetings. We will develop a civic engagement curriculum and purchase materials for use with parents and children in groups. The civic engagement curriculum for parents will include PowerPoint presentations and hands-on activities on topics such as volunteering, parent rights and responsibilities, and civic engagement for families. Portable kits of enrichment materials will be purchased for use with children while parents are meeting. The kits must be able to be quickly set up and used in a variety of settings (recreation center, school cafeteria, classroom, playground) and provide children with additional experience in school readiness skills such as gross and fine motor skills, literacy, math, logical thinking, socialization, as well as age appropriate civic engagement lessons.

SCHOOL-READINESS NEED: There is a proven and direct relationship between a parent regularly reading to a young child and that child's school-readiness and later success. According to Child Trends

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Data Bank "By reading aloud to their young children, parents can help them acquire the prerequisite skills they will need to learn to read in school." Child Trends' 2010 national research shows that only 55% of U.S. children ages 3-5 are read to daily, which is even lower among African American children (35%) and Latino children (37%). Figures in Texas are lower still with only 41% of Texas parents reading daily to their young children ages 3-5. Our program addresses the need to get children ready for school by teaching low income and under-educated parents to work with their children DAILY on in-home activities for THIRTY consecutive WEEKS, which also increases their own literacy and learning. While the Child Trends statistics are important, our success shines most in the personal impact we have on families, such as shared by Yuleth D., a HIPPI parent in Dallas, TX. Yuleth has seven children and her son Alejandro, now graduated from High School, was her first child to go through HIPPI. She said "HIPPI gave Alejandro what he needed, without that there was a good chance my son would have gotten into trouble at school and joined a gang later." She recently finished working with her sixth child, Adrian, and is about to start with her youngest child Isaac. Older brother Alejandro, now at a local community college, still remembers the stories and materials they used in HIPPI. HIPPI taught Yuleth to prepare her children for school, and then challenged and educated her to become more active in her children's schools. Adding AmeriCorps' ethic of service results in parents who are more involved in their child's education at home and in the school as volunteers and advocates for education.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT NEED: In a 2001 study by Delgado-Gaitan, 98% of teachers gave parental involvement high importance and felt parents were not doing their part to help their children at home. Latino parents in particular were found to focus their efforts primarily on guiding their children morally, but not actively supporting academic efforts (Zarate, 2007). With the number of Latino children soaring (expected to triple from 5.9M in 2004 to 17.2 M in 2020 in Texas, according to the US Census), it is critically important to impact this population. In a national 2007 Child Trends study, it was found that only 46% of parents volunteered at school. These figures are lower for Latinos of whom only 35% have volunteered and African Americans at 32% volunteering. The figures are lower still for parents with limited formal education: only 20% of parents with less than a high school education and 33% of high school graduates volunteer. These are precisely the parents that HIPPI targets. While this data is not collected at the district or school level, partner organizations in Dallas, Irving, Richardson and Houston have identified schools and neighborhoods reflecting these populations. This is done by serving predominately African American and Latino children in school

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attendance areas with a minimum of 40% of children on free and reduced lunch (the national standard for school-wide Title I instructional support).

AMERICORPS MEMBERS SOLVING COMMUNITY PROBLEMS We request 78 half-time members to each serve 16-17 parents for a total of 1,250 families. Beneficiaries, ie. parents of 3, 4 and 5 year-old children, will be recruited based on the need for school-readiness activities for the preschool child and on the parent's commitment to complete the 30-week curriculum. Services will be provided across the state (Amarillo, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Houston, Irving, Jacksonville, Longview, Odessa, Richardson, Rio Grande Valley) through partnerships with school districts and established non-profit organizations that will oversee day to day program operations and cover most of the cost of operating the program. Services within these communities focus on low income families, and parents with limited formal education, many of which are immigrants.

MEMBER ACTIVITIES The HIPPY model consists of two service components: weekly home visits and monthly parent meetings. The majority of member time will be devoted to providing weekly one-hour HIPPY home visits (30-weeks) to each family served. Home visits allow members to provide one-on-one support and training directly to hard to reach parents so they are prepared to work daily in order to prepare their children for school. Parents will learn to work with their child using a detailed, research-based school-readiness curriculum. This results in parents engaging in 20 minutes of daily activities at home with their child for 30 consecutive weeks (and ultimately with children gaining the skills needed for school success). During each home visit, members also inform parents about volunteer needs at the school and encourage parents to volunteer. Monthly parent group meetings are organized by members and their coordinators, and focus on parent education and involvement topics (resulting in parents receiving information on community resources and becoming more involved in their communities). Parents learn valuable information in these meetings. A parent at our Richardson site wrote a letter to the school district sharing how participating in the HIPPY program has changed her life. She shared that she noticed a rash on her child and immediately took the child to the emergency room where her concerns were initially dismissed. The mother stated that she had handouts from a HIPPY parent meeting that she had attended about seeking medical care for your child and began to ask the advised questions and push for results. After testing it was found that her child had vasculitis, which could have been an indication of a very serious illness. The mother credits HIPPY with giving her the tools to act in the best interest of her child.

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NEED FOR MEMBERS Members are needed to ensure that parents not only prepare their child for school but take an active role in their child's school as a volunteer. This is much needed in low income Latino and African American communities as demonstrated in earlier data on volunteering. Through AmeriCorps we transform those we serve into those who serve. This two-way ethic of service enriches the school-readiness focused HIPPY model by mobilizing parents. We will integrate parent engagement training in the already required HIPPY monthly parent meetings (whose topics currently vary and do not focus on parent engagement), and provide children with high quality enrichment while parents are at the meetings (current services include a variety of topics and strategies). Each parent will be asked to give back to their community, and if eligible, may become an AmeriCorps member and further enrich their service experiences and opportunities. Additional value is added by sub-granting AmeriCorps funding to our program partners. This allows us to increase the number of families served by the program and the quality of programming. HIPPYCorps members reach an unmet need and generate volunteerism in communities that greatly need more support. Members become a trusted face at the school for parents, and the voice of parents to the school. Without AmeriCorps members, this link does not exist. There are no known volunteer programs that focus on school-readiness programming in low income communities, and members will support, but not replace, any volunteers or staff already dedicated to volunteer development or parent involvement.

EVIDENCE BASED AND MEASURABLE IMPACT Primary program goals are to increase school-readiness and parent involvement each year, and cumulatively over the course of the grant. The intervention is accomplished through delivery of a research-proven curriculum at weekly home visits. Parents work with their children daily for 30-weeks, a method that has proven to increase the number of literacy activities on average each week from the beginning to the end of the program year, resulting in the child being prepared for success in school. We will collect process data on parent progress and completion of the 30-week curriculum, and their participation in the monthly parent meetings. Last year we selected a new standardized measure of school-readiness to replace our Kindergarten Teacher Survey (secondary data) with a direct measure of children's readiness (primary data). While school districts have given us access to student data, we decided to focus on measures that allow us to collect data directly so we are not dependent on external partners for data collection. Several measures were reviewed and the Bracken School Readiness Assessment (BSRA), an 85-item nationally-normed test, was piloted. BSRA assesses knowledge needed for school-readiness. Results of

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standard scores demonstrated that HIPPY children made statistically significant gains in school-readiness, with 3 year-olds starting at an average standard score of 77.3% and ending at 84.9% at the post assessment; 4 year-olds continued the growth at an average 85.2%, and by the time they entered the 5 year-old program their scores maxed out at 99.6% when they were enrolled in kindergarten. This evaluation has helped hone our efforts to primarily focus on serving 3- and 4-year-olds, and only serving 5-year-olds who need it the most. As part of our ongoing commitment to promote in-depth research in addition to our standard evaluation, two extensive studies of Texas HIPPY have been conducted since 2011. Moore (2011) found that children in the Irving HIPPY program were more likely to have higher passing rates on the first administration of TAKS Reading, Math and Science sections compared to non-participants (TAKS is Texas' statewide standardized student assessment). Johnson, Martinez-Cantu, Jacobson, and Weir (2012) found that HIPPY kindergartners had higher attendance rates, higher Pre-Kindergarten enrollment, and higher promotion to 1st grade compared to other kindergartners in the school district. Annually we report research and process data to each site, post statewide results on our website and present research at national conferences.

RECENT PERFORMANCE / IMPACTS In 2011-2012, fifty eight (58) HIPPYCorps members served families in five Texas Communities: Dallas, Grand Prairie, Houston, Irving, and Richardson. Evaluation that year showed that 86% of HIPPY children were deemed "ready for school" by Kindergarten teachers; with 93.5% of HIPPY children were reported as "average or above" in classroom adaptability and 93.4% of HIPPY children reported as "average or above" in classroom verbal behavior. This surpassed our projected performance target that 85% of our HIPPY 5 year-olds would be deemed ready for school. In addition, we have consistently shown a statistically significant increase in parental involvement for first-year HIPPY parents from the beginning to the end of their participation in the HIPPY program. Our external evaluation demonstrates that HIPPY parents increased the amount of time spent engaging their children in literacy activities at home from monthly to weekly. Parents also had more frequent, positive interactions with their child's teacher, going from sometimes to a great deal of the time; and, increased their level of school involvement from a little more than once or twice a year to more than once per week. Lastly, HIPPY parents increased their contact telephone and written contact with their child's teacher from an average of never at the pre-test, to 3-4 times a year at the post-test. Furthermore, Texas HIPPY parents scored higher than the national average in the areas of parent involvement at school, parent's endorsement of school, and frequency of parent-teacher contact. We had 306 parents serve nearly 6,000 volunteer

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hours at their child's school in 11-12. One challenge we've faced is a decline in the number of volunteer hours for HIPPY parents as school districts are now requiring criminal background checks for school volunteers, which can be an intimidating process for low-income parents. This will be a topic for discussion at our annual MLK roundtable supper in January 2013, and through this request we will strengthen our parent involvement strategy by providing home visitors with training and resource materials to use in parent meetings.

MEMBER RECRUITMENT The program structure of this statewide project is made possible through partnerships with implementing partner organizations that have identified the HIPPY model as a way of meeting their school-readiness and parent involvement needs. Seventy eight part-time HIPPYCorps members will be recruited, selected and trained by 16 certified HIPPY Coordinators at each site. Part-time slots align with our program design because members are recruited from the families served (and the targeted community) based on the HIPPY model of peer leadership. Members are primarily parents of young children who are engaged in their first professional experience and part-time service allows them to balance "work" and home. Throughout the program year, site coordinators are pre-recruiting active, engaged HIPPY parents to become home visitors (members) the next year. This relationship building, grow-from-within strategy has allowed us to maintain high levels of member enrollment (100% in 11-12 and 12-13) and retention (97% in 10-11 and 95% in 11-12, compared to the Texas average of 89% in 11-12). Recruiting home visitors from underrepresented populations is built into the program design and is a strength of our peer-to-peer model. This design is being replicated at the new sites we are establishing, which will also increase our services in rural areas of Texas. We have continued to successfully recruit and maintain our corps of members due to the support, training and supervision provided to them by the site coordinators and the Texas HIPPYCorps staff.

MEMBER TRAINING Since HIPPYCorps members are recruited from the community served, many face the same risk factors as the parents they serve. HIPPYCorps members require a great deal of training, support and supervision to successfully complete their term and go on to use their education award. By program design, each of the 30-weeks of curriculum is role played during a three-hour weekly training by the on-site coordinator, using a training curriculum provided by HIPPY USA. With the understanding that learning is continuous, Texas HIPPY has provided coordinators with a year-long training curriculum and structure that they deliver to their members

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on-site. This training curriculum begins with a weeklong HIPYPYCorps orientation followed by 15 hours in training modules with topics in Parent Involvement (Developing Parent Leadership, Communicating with Schools, Managing Parent Volunteers) and Member Development (Communication and Goal Setting, Using the Education Award, Peer Mentorship, and Teambuilding). A training design was developed last grant cycle to ensure consistency among sites, and an online assessment system was established to ensure that members not only receive but understand the content of training. This online training/assessment includes a section on AmeriCorps history, and understanding prohibited activities. HIPYPY USA also provides coordinators with training modules to present to home visitors, on topics related to the HIPYPY model (Home Visits, HIPYPY Curriculum Use, Parent Meetings, and Child Development). Additionally, site coordinators provide members with an orientation to the organization where they serve (organizational history, structure, policies, protocols, and deadlines). Once a year all members are brought together for conference-style training (our annual "Kick Off") with two strands: Personal Development and Civic Engagement. With this grant, members will be provided with resources and training on how to engage parents as volunteers and will be expected to present this directly to parents at monthly meetings. Additionally, members will learn how to provide children with school-readiness and age appropriate civic engagement experiences while parents are at the meetings. The timeline for member training is as follows below.

~AUG-SEPT~ Pre-service Orientations; Parent Leadership 101 training; set up members as mentors to other members; and coordinator observation of home visits (between curriculum weeks 1-5).

~OCT-DEC~ Weekly 3 hour on-site training begins and continues for 30-weeks; Parent Involvement Training; Developing Parent Leadership in Group Meetings training; Communicating with Principals training; Team Building training; Educational Empowerment / Ed Award training.

~NOV-MARCH~ In person statewide Kick Off training for members and Coordinators; Parent Involvement in School training; Team Building; mid-year home visit observation and feedback from coordinator (between curriculum weeks 10-15).

~APRIL-MAY~ Volunteer Recognition training; Home to School Transition training; Closing Retreat and Reflection.

~MAY-JUNE~ End-of-year home visit observation and feedback from coordinator (between curriculum weeks 20-25); end of term site visits by Texas HIPYPY.

MEMBER SUPERVISION By program design, the HIPYPY coordinator position is full time. The coordinators must adhere to specific duties per HIPYPY USA requirements for accreditation. These

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duties include reporting, early childhood training, home visitor observations, monthly parent meeting planning, weekly curriculum training of home visitors (members) and participation in required Texas HIPPPY and HIPPPY USA coordinator training. Each coordinator must go through the HIPPPY USA accreditation process which requires that the coordinator is meeting the full time duties. HIPPPYCorps is a multi-site and multi-city program which requires a separate, full time, coordinator for each site, with larger sites having more than one coordinator. This provides for effective supervision and monitoring of member activities.

Coordinators are selected and hired by the partnering agency, and are required to have a degree in Education, Social Work, Counseling or a related area. They must complete a weeklong preservice training by HIPPPY USA plus they receive ongoing support and technical assistance from Texas HIPPPY and an assigned national trainer. Texas HIPPPY provides 5 days of training to site coordinators, and two on-site visits, and ongoing support and technical assistance. A system is in place to ensure monitoring sites for fidelity to the HIPPPY program model and AmeriCorps program requirements. During their first month of home visits, the coordinator will accompany the Member and provide support and feedback. Family files are checked quarterly and home visit observations and supervision will be provided by week 5, week 15 and week 25 when members are formally reviewed. Weekly group supervision will be provided after the role play training, and will focus on programmatic components such as home visits, parent meetings, volunteer development, and children's enrichment.

Each site receives a start-up, mid-year, and end of year visit. Texas HIPPPY program staff will utilize the site monitoring tool developed by the Onestar Foundation and adapted by the Texas HIPPPY State Office. The tool is submitted each year with start-up documents for review by the Grant Office. Texas HIPPPY program staff will ensure full compliance at the initial start-up visit and monitor compliance in additional visits. Should a site be deemed non-compliant during a site visit, a contingency plan will be put into place that includes additional training and technical assistance from Texas HIPPPY staff. Depending upon the severity of non-compliance, the site may receive a sanction of additional training requirements and/or a reduction of member slots. Additional support comes from Texas HIPPPY staff that provides one-on-one support, encouragement, and supervision for members who are not on track for completing their term--this happens with approximately 10% of the members each year and allows us to provide assistance where it is needed the most, and to keep our rate of retention high (98% in 11-12). This level and intensity of supervision is needed for our population of members who

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are themselves vulnerable ie. low income, immigrant, limited education, etc.

MEMBER EXPERIENCE The power of HIPPYCorps is in the recruitment, support and retention of members who are alumni parents from the communities being served. This personal experience catalyzes parents into engaged members who in turn motivate and engage other parents. Ana P, learned about HIPPY when her son turned four. On completing the program with her child, their home instructor told her Ana would make a good HIPPYCorps member, and she reluctantly went to interview with the coordinator. Ana says, "Before I knew it I was becoming a HIPPYCorps home instructor. I was so afraid. On my first home visit, I cried before I went in to see the parent and now, I am working on my BA degree at University of Texas Dallas. AmeriCorps has truly changed my life. No one, not even me, could imagine that I would be about to finish college and that I would be the one setting such a great example for my son and my siblings."

Members are provided with opportunities weekly to reflect on the impact they are making in the lives of parents they serve, and share personal challenges and triumphs such as Ana's. They are inducted as AmeriCorps members at the beginning of the year, provided training on the history of AmeriCorps; and, will be provided generic business cards they can use to introduce themselves, these will have the AmeriCorps Pledge on them. Members are connected with each other during the annual Kick Off Training, and with the greater AmeriCorps network by sending a representative to the One Star Member training, and connecting to other AmeriCorps programs in their area during special days of service or training opportunities. HIPPYCorps has organized a Life After AmeriCorps event that was open to all AmeriCorps members in the North Texas area and included an AmeriCorps Alums recruitment opportunity, and the opportunity to network with other AmeriCorps sites. AmeriCorps identity will be fostered in members through induction with the AmeriCorps Pledge, use of logo gear, and signage at their program sites.

VOLUNTEER GENERATION Research shows that low income families are an underutilized volunteer base waiting to be tapped. Our target pool of volunteers is the HIPPY parents who are being served by AmeriCorps members and alumni. We are transforming those we serve into those who serve. Early research on HIPPY in Texas found that the number one reason parents give for not volunteering is that they "are not asked". We have changed that. The volunteer message is taken by each member to each parent served each week of the 30-week service. In this way, we will develop a

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bank of prepared and motivated parent volunteers. All 1,250 parents will be challenged to serve their child's school for at least 20 hours over the course of each program year. A training curriculum has been devised to help members understand how to best recruit, support and recognize their HIPPY parents as volunteers, and ensure that parents are engaged in appropriate service. Examples of parents' volunteer activities range from one-time events such as field trips, to weekly volunteering such as reading to children in the classroom, or daily street safety patrols. These are all allowable volunteer activities. Members will interact with school staff to evaluate volunteer needs and will act as the conduit to connect parents to the campus. Parents will receive written information on the benefits of volunteering, and verbal and written updates on volunteer needs, activities and events. We expect them to complete the sometimes challenging and intimidating volunteer registration process. As a group they are expected to donate over 10,000 volunteer hours. Members will provide each parent with a log to document their volunteer activities which will be used to recognize parent volunteers at the end of the year. Our goal is to help parents feel comfortable so that they will continue volunteering throughout their child's education even after they have completed HIPPY. In the long term, this will result in the development of a previously untapped sector of volunteers in the community, ie. immigrant, low income, bilingual, and minority parents.

COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTITY Our materials, web presence and physical locations reflect the AmeriCorps identity through logo use and integration of the AmeriCorps message into our training, outreach and other materials. We ensure that our partnering organizations also commit to the AmeriCorps brand by providing them with logo-clad documents that can be tailored, by providing them with signage, and training them to incorporate the AmeriCorps ethic into their programmatic and training activities.

Organizational Capability

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING Founded in 1890, today's University of North Texas (UNT) is a recognized student-centered public research university with 36,000+ students. Texas HIPPY is part of the UNT public service and community outreach efforts that includes the Center for Parent Education, the Center for Public Service, the Child and Family Resource Clinic, and the Volunteer Center. Texas HIPPY is also part of the national network of HIPPY state offices, under the leadership of HIPPY USA, and our mission is to promote and support HIPPY and other early childhood family initiatives in Texas. UNT has been awarded and successfully managed HIPPYCorps for 12 years, and has the experience, staffing and management structure to

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implement this grant. UNT departments such as grants management, human resources, and payment services ensure that rigorous grant management policies and oversight are in place. AmeriCorps is one of many Federal grants administered by UNT, and organizational systems are in place to manage, track and supervise the activities in this proposal. The UNT Office of Research Services oversees the fiscal management of all grants and contracts received by UNT which totaled \$35,429,251 in 2011-2012. We have received and managed federal awards from a broad array of agencies across several academic disciplines. UNT has extensive policies and systems in place to effectively manage a Federal grant, including an integrated, on-line budget accounting system that manages purchasing, payroll, budget reconciliation, detailed account registers, and ensures separation of duties. HIPPYCorps is integrated and supported by these UNT systems and policies. Each time HIPPYCorps has been audited and monitored we have met or exceeded requirements and expectations; moreover, HIPPYCorps grant management systems and forms have been shared by OneStar with other programs across the state as best practices. The UNT Texas HIPPY Center is part of the College of Education, Department of Educational Psychology. Texas HIPPY staff has moved location from the prior grant, and is now housed on campus, resulting in a cost savings compared to past grant requests. Members are located within partnering agencies across the state, and are recruited, supervised and paid by these agencies, as are the site coordinators. Texas HIPPY staff is in continuous communication with both partner agency staff and UNT staff as it relates to the implementation of the HIPPYCorps multi-site, statewide model. The Texas HIPPY staff will be responsible for member orientation; site supervisor (HIPPY Coordinator) training and support; member enrollment and exit documentation; coordinating implementation of statewide research activities; annual member training conference (on parent involvement, school-readiness and Life after AmeriCorps); monitoring AmeriCorps funding and programmatic requirements; development of online training and documentation resources; new site development; and statewide partnerships. Site Coordinators, on staff at partner organizations, are dedicated full-time to the implementation of HIPPY and therefore HIPPYCorps. The UNT Legal Department manages sub-granting contracts in collaboration with the Office of Research Services. Britt Krhovjak is the HIPPYCorps Post-Award Manager and has also served as a UNT Senior Financial Analyst. Arminta Jacobson, Professor and Senior Researcher with the project has 12 years of experience with HIPPY Research, and oversees a graduate student who has 2 years of experience, together they conduct the independent research of HIPPY across Texas. Carla Mowell, Texas HIPPY Program Director, has over 14 years of experience managing HIPPYCorps; Tracie Crosswhite, Program Assistant, has over 9 years grant management

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experience and has been trained in AmeriCorps by the OneStar Foundation and UNT in sound fiscal management; Keshia Bruno, Assistant Director, was an AmeriCorps member and has an additional 6 years of experience in managing AmeriCorps. Two part-time Project Assistant positions for online system development will be filled by David Tisdale, formerly of Texas HIPYPY, who will develop online materials for home visitors to use in parent meetings; and Liz Cazares, former Home Visitor, to train coordinators and members in the use of the online ETO system to track parent participation. A graduate student will be paid from matching funds to support the project. The experienced local HIPYPY Coordinators have on average 7 years of experience in implementing HIPYPYCorps, and they will peer-mentor new coordinators coming on board to implement HIPYPYCorps in 6 new communities. We provide the fiscal reporters at partner organizations with a webpage of guiding documents on how to complete reports, and we host training on fiscal issues via conference call. Programmatic training and orientation is more extensive, with site visits, 5 days of in-person training and regular conference calls, which also ties into member training. Our "train the trainer" approach ensures that site coordinators receive the training, resources and support needed to provide quality ongoing training to members. We have over 14 years of experience in evaluating the HIPYPYCorps model, and have used that experience to refine our evaluation instruments and methodologies. Because we are housed at a major research institution, we have access to high quality graduate students, practicum students and most importantly to faculty with an interest in our intervention. This makes us particularly well suited to providing high quality research / evaluation at a minimal cost.

SUSTAINABILITY Our budget consistently exceeds the required match to grant funds ratio of 50%, and this request maintains that ratio while doubling the number of sites and increasing the number of members by 20 (part-time). By maintaining a 68% match to 32% grant funds ratio, which requires a large local commitment, we use AmeriCorps grant funds to focus on the integration of HIPYPY with AmeriCorps, not on subsidizing the core costs of HIPYPY. At an average annual cost of \$1,650 per Texas family to implement the program, the greatest bulk of HIPYPY funding (77%) is provided by local agencies (our primary stakeholders) although not all this cost/match are reflected in the attached budget. New and existing sites are expected to bear the great majority of costs to implement the program and are doing so with documented and allowable match from Education, Health and Human Service and local revenue funds. Support from these stakeholders is primarily in the form of cash and in-kind match (from partner agencies); visibility, PR and technical assistance from local

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advisory members; and cash and in-kind support from elementary school principals/campuses. We have 10 partner organizations committed to implementing HIPPIY, listed in the Source of Match attachment. This translates into many advisors, parents, principals, administrators and other stakeholders at each site. They were the primary planning force in implementation of HIPPIYCorps in their community. During this process, the stakeholders identified the specific neighborhoods and populations to be served, recruited and hired staff, developed resource / referral partnerships for recruiting and serving families, and developed a plan to implement a HIPPIY model with fidelity. Their continued involvement is key to the longterm sustainability of HIPPIYCorps; they are tasked with maintaining and securing additional funding through grants and partnerships, with developing donors and with integrating HIPPIYCorps into the community plans and strategies for school-readiness.

COMPLIANCE/ACCOUNTABILITY: The UNT Texas HIPPIY Center supports and oversees service sites through monitoring, training, technical assistance and development of online resources. Together, these systems will be used to prevent incompliance and detect compliance. Support and oversight is a yearlong effort, beginning with the establishment of service sites that are designed to meet the requirements of HIPPIY and AmeriCorps. Compliance is accomplished by first setting clear expectations with the sites, and building rules and regulations into the member enrollment/contract and the site contract and the site monitoring instrument. Each site will receive a start-up, mid-year, and end of year site visit. Texas HIPPIY UNT program staff will use a site monitoring tool adapted from the one used by the OneStar Foundation. The tool is submitted each year with start up documents for review by the OneStar Foundation. Texas HIPPIY UNT program staff will ensure full compliance at the initial yearly visit and monitor compliance in additional visits. Should a site be deemed non-compliant during a site visit, a plan will be put into place that includes additional training and technical assistance from Texas HIPPIY staff. Depending upon the severity of non-compliance, the site may receive a sanction of additional training requirements and/or a reduction of member slots. Sites receive an additional site visit from a HIPPIY USA national trainer who monitors their implementation of the HIPPIY model through a rigorously documented certification process. All requirements, forms, timelines and instruments are posted online to ensure that sites have ready access to current and accurate information. Throughout the year, regular communication takes place by phone, email, and in person. In partnership with HIPPIYUSA, an online system will be used to track family enrollment and progress; this will allow us to have real-time access to information from each site. The oversight efforts described above have been developed over the course of the past 10+

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years of building and clarifying relationships with our partner organizations who implement HIPPY. UNT has entered into sub-grantee relationships with partner organizations and has documented sites' compliance with fiscal and programmatic requirements, as detailed above. Partner organizations also developed connections among themselves and mentor new incoming coordinators, share best practices and challenged and encourage each other to provide excellent services. HIPPYCorps enrollment was 100% in 2011 and 2012, and had a retention rate of 97% in 2011 and 95% in 2007, compared to the Texas average of 89%. We take retention very seriously, not only because of the effects it has on AmeriCorps and members, but because it affects the families being served. The nature of home visits is very personal, and when a home visitor (member) drops out, the families they serve are often resistant to accepting a new home visitor into their home, and some even drop out of the program. As members of the community being served, our members often face similar challenges such as lack of formal education, economic challenges, unemployment in the family, single parenthood and other issues. As part of a vulnerable population, our HIPPYCorps members need and receive a great deal of support, supervision and training. Our keys to retention include clear and thorough training and consistent on-site supervision. Additional support comes from Texas HIPPY staff that provides one-on-one support, encouragement, and supervision for members who are not on track for completing their term, thereby increasing the likelihood of their completing their term successfully.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

COST EFFECTIVENESS Our strategy is to establish AmeriCorps at multiple sites by leveraging local commitments to implementing the HIPPY model. We have greatly reduced our cost per MSY from the prior request by creating efficiencies and increasing the partnerships which allowed for greater funding. Our cost per MSY, at \$12,620 is significantly lower than the allowable amount (\$13,300) and has even been lowered from the past request of \$12,767 per member. HIPPYCorps is cost-effective because it does not subsidize the core costs of implementing the HIPPY program, but rather supports the integration of HIPPY with AmeriCorps. In order to maintain cost effectiveness, the costs of member living allowances and full-time site coordinator salaries are fully borne by the partnering agencies, as are most of HIPPY curriculum costs. Not all these costs are reflected in the grant request and match. The actual cost of serving the 1,250 families for a year is \$2,062,500 (at \$1,650 each). These figures include the cost of providing a statewide network of training and support, site development, research and other efforts of Texas HIPPY. The cost for each member to serve the average caseload of 17 families is \$28,050 per member. The proposed AmeriCorps budget of \$467,576

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amounts to 23% of the total cost of HIPPLYCorps in Texas. We have received CNCS funds in the past: formula, competitive and national direct (through our national office, HIPPLY USA). Texas HIPPLY has and will continue to obtain diverse resources for program implementation and sustainability. In addition to the allowable Federal and Non-Federal match provided by partner organizations, the Texas HIPPLY Advisory Council builds community support and funding for HIPPLY throughout Texas. Advisors develop financial support from individual donors, foundations and corporations. The University of North Texas Development office will continue to provide support in grant writing for foundation, corporate, state and federal funding. The non CNCS resource commitment we have secured for this request amount is \$985,225 and primarily comes from Texas Education Agency, Texas Department of Health and Human Services, local tax bases of school district partners, and grants from private sources. This extensive list is included as an attachment. In the past we have received other funding sources, including one large donor gift, over \$100,000 in foundation grants, and in-kind match for space and services. We have the commitments in hand for the match required, and will continue to secure funding sources for both the statewide efforts and local funding for the program. In a 2004 Return on Investment study by Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2004) the benefit generated by HIPPLY was found to be \$3,313 compared to a cost of \$1,837 (or \$1,676 in Texas) for a savings of at least \$1,476 per child above the investment. Applying this to our request of \$467,576, means saving at least \$2 million each program year in future costs by serving our 1,250 children. Pre-Kindergarten costs an average of \$3,650 per child according to the Texas Education Agency, who only serves 29% of the 777,163 three- and four-year-old children in the state. While our request to match ratio remains substantially the same, and our request is slightly more than it was in the last grant period, however we are expanding our reach to six additional communities in Texas, adding 20 PT members, and increasing the number of children served from 850 to 1,250.

BUDGET ADEQUACY The budget outlined has been developed to support the cost of increasing the number of families served by the program, providing systematic and intensive training and technical assistance to both new and experienced site coordinators and members, expanding member training and materials for parent meetings and child enrichment during those meetings, providing oversight visits and assistance to sub-granted sites with partner organizations across the state, providing statewide high quality research on program outcomes, and covering the costs of maintaining a statewide office for the purpose of integrating the AmeriCorps ethic of service into the HIPPLY model

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of school-readiness and parent involvement. These activities are related not only to the budget, but to the proposed objectives which are aligned and based on a rigorous logic model. The budget is sufficient to support the program design because of the extensive program partnerships that provide the bulk of funding for core HIPPY activities. This request funds the technical assistance required to integrate AmeriCorps into HIPPY and to enrich the HIPPY model to include civic engagement of parents and children. Criminal history and FBI checks are included in the budget and are required of the program partner sites prior to members beginning their service.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

The Texas HIPPY Evaluation Plan consists of using outcome measures for both parent involvement and school readiness. Parents will be pre- and post-tested on a standardized measure of Parent Involvement that will be compared to a national sample. Children will be assessed using the Bracken School Readiness Assessment to measure their skill levels in four skill areas: colors, letters, numbers, sizes, comparisons and shapes basic skills that are expected for Kindergarteners to succeed in school. These two measures are reflected in our Performance Measures. Additionally, through our partnership with MIECHV we will measure child abuse prevention and developmental delays in children. Abuse prevention data will be collected through pre- and post-testing of parents using the nationally normed Protective Factors Survey (PFS). Developmental delays will be identified using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and home visitors will provide these children with referrals and additional support. Process data will be collected on the number of families enrolled, weekly home visits, number of families who complete the 30 weeks, and the number of hours parents spend volunteering. At our school district sites, we will also collect standardized test scores and longitudinal data on children as they progress through school.

Amendment Justification

n/a

Clarification Summary

n/a

Continuation Changes

n/a