

Narratives

Executive Summary

Reading Partners respectfully requests \$133,000 from CNCS and Maryland GOSV, matched with \$284,789 from Reading Partners. This grant will support our proven literacy intervention program in 6 Title I elementary schools in Baltimore, Maryland. Support at this level will enable 10 full-time Reading Partners ACMs to recruit and manage 360 community volunteers to provide one-on-one literacy tutoring to at least 300 struggling readers in grades K-5 twice a week during the September 2013 - August 2014 program year. 65% of students who complete the program will advance their literacy skills by at least one full grade-level. This project will support the Education Focus Area for CNCS.

Rationale and Approach

a. NEED

Since 2009, the percentage of 4th graders reading at grade level standards or above has been stagnant. For three years now, 88-89% of 4th graders in Baltimore City Public Schools have not been reading at grade-level. Outside Baltimore City the situation is just as dire; in fourth grade classrooms, students from low-income communities are failing to meet grade-level standards for reading and failing to keep up with their peers, with only 24% reading at or above grade level. This means that 3 out of 4 Maryland low-income 4th graders are still grappling to master basic literacy skills ranging from sounding out words to retelling a story's plot. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that in 2011, only 11 percent of fourth graders in Baltimore City Public Schools performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level. Those who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch, an indicator of poverty, had an average score that was 20 points lower than students who were not eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 2009 (19 points).

Students from low-income communities are not the only ones who are struggling to master the mechanics of reading; an absence of strong reading skills is pervasive amongst minority communities. The same study reported that African-American students had an average score that was 23 points lower than their white peers. 86.6% of fourth graders in Baltimore City Public Schools are African-American, and yet only 11 percent of these children were reading at or above grade level in 2011. The real grievance of our students' daily struggle is that the defeat they feel in 4th grade will follow them throughout their academic careers. In a 2011 report, Baltimore's Annie E. Casey Foundation found that students reading below grade level in third grade were four times as likely as their peers to

Narratives

exit school before earning a diploma. Indeed, it is critical to support struggling readers during the elementary years when targeted, data-driven, and personalized intervention can maintain them on a path towards future academic and employment success. These are the reasons why RP has chosen to focus on serving low income 2nd through 5th grade students. We work with the conviction that community service and volunteerism are powerful yet under-utilized forces when it comes to enacting positive change in our schools and for our children. To that end, we are dedicated to mobilizing community volunteers to become advocates for educational opportunity in their local communities. Our program is designed so that no matter a volunteer's prior experience with education or children, he or she can learn to use our research-based curriculum and support a student's concrete skill mastery. In this way, RP empowers everyone and anyone to become a change agent for their local schools.

b. AMERICORPS MEMBERS AS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SOLVE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

With RP, AmeriCorps Members (ACMs) will serve in one of three roles: Site Coordinator (SC), Regional Site Coordinator, (RSC), or Outreach Coordinator (OC). Under the supervision of RP staff, these members will serve together to recruit, train, and manage community volunteers to provide personalized literacy tutoring to K-5 students who are reading below grade level at each of our school sites. Altogether, these members will recruit and manage 60 volunteers to serve 50 students at each of our 6 schools. ACMs are the best means to meet this need because our program model only requires 1-1.5 ACMs per school. By training and managing volunteers to provide direct service, ACMs allow RP to serve many more students than if members solely tutored. ACMs are also able to empower their community by engaging volunteers with our tutoring model. Overall, more students and volunteers are receiving the benefits of ACM service.

Site Coordinators: SCs are school-based positions and are responsible for managing the delivery of our tutoring program for 30-75 students Monday - Thursday at that school. Fridays are used for professional development trainings, service days, or tutoring make-up sessions. Under the supervision of a RP Program Manager, SCs are responsible for three activities: cultivating and stewarding relationships with their school's teachers and administration, training and coaching volunteer tutors to ensure each session is productive, and collecting and recording data on students' literacy development. To elaborate on each of these areas of work, SCs are responsible for maintaining close and consistent communication with teachers and administration to share school events, schedules, student availability for tutoring, student data, and student progress. In regards to volunteer tutor

Narratives

management, SCs are responsible for teaching volunteers how to use our research-based curriculum, pairing them with a student, observing tutoring sessions and coaching tutors with new strategies or activities to facilitate learning, and monitoring tutors' completion of progress monitoring notes. Data collection and management is the third major component of this role and entails assessing each student at entry into the program, again at mid-year, and end-of-year; developing a Individualized Reading Plan for each student and adapting it as needed (with input from the Program Manager); and collecting school-based assessment data and recording it in our database. SCs also coordinate the production of Home Connection Events such as twice annual Reading Recitals, as well as monthly newsletters. A SCs schedule is 9am to 5pm, Monday through Friday. RP plans to place 6 SCs in 2013-14.

Regional Site Coordinators: RSCs are still school-based positions, but unlike SCs, RSCs are not assigned to one particular school. Rather, RSCs rotate between our larger school sites with the most need to provide additional direct service support. Working closely with their Program Manager, RSCs determine which schools need their help in a given week and when they arrive on site, they are tasked with specific duties such as performing make-up sessions with students who were previously absent, offering more intensive coaching to novice tutors, and supporting the SC with data collection and management. RP plans to place 3 members to serve as RSCs.

Outreach Coordinators: With guidance from a RP Outreach Manager, OCs are responsible for designing individual tutor recruitment plans for each school site and then executing those plans. OCs have desk space in the Baltimore office, but they spend much of their time at community centers, schools, businesses, and civic organizations to recruit tutors. Once a volunteer has expressed interest in RP, the OC guides the volunteer through the orientation and application, ensures the volunteer completes a background check, and schedules the volunteer to attend an on-site training with an SC before becoming a tutor. OCs also focus on renewing the commitment of current tutors and partners for the following program year. Finally, OCs are tasked with developing volunteer appreciation events or strategies to ensure our volunteers feel connected to their commitment. RP plans to place 1 OC who will serve from 9am to 5pm, Monday through Friday.

RP is requesting 10 full-time slots: 6 members will serve as SCs, 3 as regional SCs and 1 as an OC. Our service year runs from approximately September 1, 2013 to July 30, 2014.

c. EVIDENCE-BASED/EVIDENCE-INFORMED AND MEASUREABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT

The RP program is both evidence-based and evidence-informed. Our model is based on studies from educational research that supports community-driven one-to-one tutoring programs as a cost-

Narratives

effective and outcomes-successful way of improving student achievement (Slavin, R.E., Lake, C., Davis, S., & Madden, N. (2009, June) Effective programs for struggling readers: A best evidence synthesis. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education. Elbaum, B., Vaughn, S., Huges, M.T., & Moody, S. W. (2000). How Effective Are One-to-One Tutoring Programs in Reading for Elementary Students at Risk for Reading Failure?: A Meta-Analysis of the Intervention Research. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92, 4, 605-619.) As a grantee of the Social Innovation Fund, RP is also obligated to conduct independent evaluation studies to verify the efficacy of our work and to suggest further improvements. RP recently completed one such study with the Stanford University School of Education. This study included an experimental evaluation and reported that our program demonstrated statistically significant differences in reading skill gains for participants compared to control group students and had a moderate effect size (0.55), based on the Rigby PM Ultra assessments, RP's current literacy assessment. To build on the findings of the Stanford study, RP is contracting with a nationally recognized social policy research firm, MDRC, to conduct a randomized control trial (RCT) at 19 RP school sites nationwide. The study, which will include over 1,200 students, will probe the efficacy of our program design, our service fidelity across state lines, and suggest ways to improve our program. Results from the study will be ready in summer 2014.

In addition to being evidence-based, RP prides itself on being evidence-informed. To monitor and improve our program internally, RP's Research and Evaluation department focuses on assessment, curriculum and program updates to reflect changing policies such as the implementation of Common Core State Standards, and managing internal and external studies. The Research and Evaluation department also supervises our internal data collection cycle. This cycle includes a literacy assessments of each enrolled students to determine baseline literacy skills and growth; twice annual tutor, teacher, and principal surveys; collection of school-administered performance data; and qualitative notes from tutors on students' real-time breakthroughs and challenges. We record all data in our online database, Salesforce, so that our program staff and Research and Evaluation Department can analyze the data and progress-monitor. Each summer, we report students' gains to our funders, outreach partners, and tutors via emails and reports so that everyone involved in creating success for students knows how the school year progressed.

The investment by Maryland's GOSV will allow RP to have a direct academic impact on more than 1,000 children in Maryland over the next 3 years. Maryland GOSV funding for 2013-14 would allow RP to serve 300 students in Baltimore City. 65 percent of these students who receive the full dosage of tutoring (16 hours) will increase at least one full grade level in literacy skills. This performance

Narratives

measure target has been selected based on internal trend analyses on assessment data collected over the last 5 years. RP has maintained consistently strong outcomes even while scaling to serve many more students. RP selects participating students by meeting with principals, teachers and literacy specialists at each site to develop a tactical plan for identifying potential RP students. RPs education performance measure is based on the Education National Performance Measure requirements.

d. MEMBER RECRUITMENT

RP has filled 100% of our AmeriCorps (AC) positions each year for the last 3 years, and has retained at least 94%. 45% of our first-year ACMs also elected to serve a second term with RP in 2012-13. We received 44 applications last year for our 5 available positions in Baltimore. We are currently at 100% enrollment and retention for our National Direct program in Baltimore. Our recruitment strategies include: 1.Partnerships. Close partnerships with community institutions like colleges and universities, community centers, volunteer centers, and other AC programs help us promote our program. RP partners with the Maryland Career Consortium every year and plans to attend its career fair on February 15, 2013. We also have meetings in place with the University of Baltimore to participate in upcoming on-campus recruiting and interviewing events. 2.Web presence. Our website clearly explains our AC program. We post opportunities on all Maryland university and college job boards and well as bulletin boards like idealist.org, VolunteerMatch, and americorps.gov. 3.Tutor conversions. This year, 22% of our AC cohort were volunteer tutors from last year. Our Baltimore tutors will receive a tutor newsletter in January 2013 announcing the application opening for our 2013-14 AmeriCorps positions.

RPs Diversity in Recruitment Initiative ensures that each region attends Diversity Career Fairs and posts hard copies of the ACM position description in low-income communities as part of our recruitment strategy. We recruit in our service neighborhoods by making AC recruitment materials available at all of our sites, advertising open positions in the community, and working with organizations like Teach for America to recruit individuals who are passionate about community service. In 2012-13, the population of our members nationwide is comprised of the following: 40% Caucasian; 16% Multi-ethnic/Other, 14% Latino; 11% African American; 9% Asian American; 2% American Indian; 2% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; 6% declined to state.

e. MEMBER TRAINING

Training for ACMs is designed to scaffold members into their service experience by teaching them about their service commitment and service environment, supporting their transition into the service environment, and providing ongoing and consistent coaching to ensure that members are thriving.

Narratives

Training begins with 3 weeks of pre-service orientation planned by RP program staff. This training consists of: 1. AC Training & RP Orientation: All members meet at 1 location for one full week of training in August. Staff provides training on AmeriCorps-specific topics like the history of national service, prohibited activities and RP AmeriCorps policies and procedures. ACMs sign their contracts during this training. Additionally, PMs train members on RP-specific topics like literacy and pedagogy, student and tutor support, and reading assessments. 2. Center-based Training: After leaving Orientation, members spend two weeks in their regions prior to the start of tutoring. During this time, they conduct community mapping exercises to explore and learn more about what it's like to live and serve in the community, receive 1:1 coaching and orientation at their site from their manager, and set up their Reading Center. They meet with school personnel to discuss the program structure and review the Rigby student assessment processes. Members then complete classroom observations, schedule volunteers for orientations, and conduct student assessments before scheduling tutoring sessions. Training throughout the year includes 1. Weekly on-site coaching with staff 2. Friday Team days to come gather as regional teams to discuss training topics. 3. Professional development days (every other Friday) coordinated with Days of National Service. Managers cover topics such as: goal setting; public speaking; and Life after AmeriCorps. Each prohibited activity is outlined in our Member Contracts, which members must initial and sign. RP ensures that our volunteers do not engage in prohibited activities by requiring all volunteers to sign a Tutor Code of Conduct, an agreement that outlines the prohibited and acceptable activities of being a volunteer with RP. A volunteer may not begin tutoring unless this agreement has been signed.

f. MEMBER SUPERVISION

RP integrates multiple levels of support for our ACMs. OCs are supervised by Outreach Managers (OMs) who have 3-6 years of volunteer management experience. SCs are supervised by Program Managers (PMs), who all have classroom teaching experience with at-risk youth and/or a MD teaching credential. In addition to constant contact over email and phone, PMs visit each ACM at their school site at least once a week to provide in-person guidance. Members also receive support from their AmeriCorps Program Manager (ACPM). The ACPM provides prohibited activities supervision and surveys member satisfaction with the RP AmeriCorps program. The ACPM accomplishes this through training, surveys, and 1:1 check-in meetings with members. Managers are supervised by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Executive Director (RED). Program and Outreach Managers are hired based on their experience with volunteer outreach, education, and/or direct service. All managers attend a comprehensive orientation and training in June/July, participate in weekly check-

Narratives

in meetings with their direct supervisors, and participate in bi-weekly team meetings. National staff such as the CEO, COO and AmeriCorps Director also join PMs on school visits to ensure program quality and fidelity to the program model.

The RP program is compliant with the CNCS tutoring guidelines in the following ways: 1. RP requires that all members have at least a high school diploma or its equivalent and successfully complete a 120-hour training program prior to the start of the program and regular in-service trainings during the program year. Community volunteers also undergo a training program that is focused on in-school instruction. 2. RP uses the Rigby PM assessment kit to track student progress and measure student outcomes. Students are assessed three times per year and tutors use the data to guide instruction. On a weekly basis, members review tutoring notes and conference with PMs to adapt student intervention plans. 3. Upon entry into RP, every student is assessed and placed into one of the three curricular programs depending on the student's academic needs and reading skill level. 4. RP's training program is designed by expert educators to prepare tutors and members for their work in reading centers. 5. Members are supervised by PMs who have at least 5 years of experience in education, a current MD teaching credential and/or a master's (or higher) degree in education.

g. MEMBER EXPERIENCE

RP connects our members across the country during Orientation, fostering a sense of national team pride. Members connect on a regional level each week through trainings and team building. They stay connected throughout the year by receiving a monthly newsletter with current events in AC or CNCS as well as AC accomplishments at RP. RP partners with other MD AC programs such as Citizen Schools, AmeriCorps Alums, Experience Corps and the Baltimore Mayor's Volunteer Initiative on National Days of Service to give our members a sense of connection and identity to the AC brand and mission.

OCs gain in-depth experience in community partnership development, and they see the impact community volunteers can have. SCs have meaningful service experiences as they assess and report on the measurable improvements their students make with the support of volunteers.

RP is clear on our commitment to continuous improvement and learning during Orientation. Each month, ACMs submit a reflection on an area for growth and a story of pride along with their timesheets. Friday trainings start and end with discussion questions designed for self-reflection. ACMs participate in MLK Day and AC Week each year by designing and leading service projects in their neighborhoods. ACMs identify as such to community members and partners by wearing their RP AmeriCorps gear that prominently displays the AC and RP logos at sites and events. ACMs are trained

Narratives

to abide by all regulations outlined in their member contracts and handbook. Pins, jackets, and polos with RP and AC logos are distributed after the AmeriCorps Pledge is complete. All members participate in a Life After AmeriCorps training in June before they graduate.

h. VOLUNTEER GENERATION

The RP model is a unique approach to helping struggling students from low-income communities. Local community volunteers are empowered by our ACMs through training and personalized coaching to tutor their own students. This begins by OCs developing volunteer outreach strategies for each school. As of November 30, 2012, our Baltimore OC has already recruited 96 volunteers in Baltimore to tutor at our 4 schools. We anticipate recruiting 200 volunteers by the end of the 2012-13 program year. Because OCs dedicate so much time to fostering relationships with volunteers, we expect to retain over 50% of our volunteers next year based on past trends, contributing to the 2013-14 goal to recruit 360 volunteer tutors.

SCs focus on serving students by creating Individualized Reading Plans (IRPs) for tutors to follow in order to best support their student. Our student-tutor pairs work together for 45 minutes twice a week, following an IRP tailored to that student's particular needs and strengths. To execute the plan, tutors use a multi-level, research-based curriculum developed in partnership with the Stanford University School of Education. RP's ACMs are directly responsible for volunteer recruitment and management throughout RP. Volunteers are trained on prohibited activities and asked to sign a Tutor Code of Conduct before tutoring. Tutors are held accountable to this under the supervision of ACMs and their supervisor.

i. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION

Being an AC program is central to the RP brand, and we display the AC logo throughout each regional office and on our marketing collateral. The AC logo is clearly displayed on our website, recruitment table banners and pamphlets, and promotional videos. We also partner and connect with other AC organizations for National Days of service, training, and organizational strategy. Members receive gear such as polos, jackets, and pins and are educated on the history of AC during orientation and training during the year.

Organizational Capability

a. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING

RP's mission is to help children become lifelong readers by empowering community volunteers to provide individualized instruction that produce measurable results. RP was founded in 1999 by three retired California teachers. The teachers recruited a small group of volunteers to tutor the students at

Narratives

their local elementary school who they saw falling further behind each year. RP was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) under the name YES Reading in 2001. The organization changed its name to RP in 2008 and has grown exponentially since then, shifting from a local Bay Area organization to a national organization that is serving over 5,000 students from over 100 schools throughout Maryland, California, Washington, D.C., Texas, New York and Colorado during the 2012-13 school year. RP received a \$3.5M Social Innovation Fund investment from CNCS via the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation in April 2011. This investment, along with high interest from the education community in Baltimore City, enabled us to expand to Baltimore in January 2012.

We launched our program at Friendship Academy at Cherry Hill serving 41 students. In our inaugural year, 91% of students accelerated their rate of skill mastery and 76% finished the year closer to their target grade level than when they began the school year. Building on this success, 2012-13 marked RP's first full year of programming in Maryland, placing a total of 5 MSYs at 4 Baltimore schools where we will provide 170 students with one-on-one tutoring. RP in Baltimore will expand to a total of six school sites in 2013-2014: Friendship Academy at Cherry Hill, Edgcombe Circle Elementary, Westport Academy Elementary, Callaway Elementary, Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary and F.L. Templeton Prep Academy. While a majority of RP schools are in BCPS, F.L. Templeton Prep Academy became a public charter in 2010. RP is partnering with them because the school's MSA results in 4th grade proficient to advanced reading have decreased by 24.6 percent from 2011 to 2012. Only 54.1 percent of 4th grade students at this school scored proficient or advanced in 2012, according to state assessment data. We aim to serve 300 students at these six school sites, with this number growing in future years.

The administration of the AC program falls under the purview of our AC department. RP created this department when it received our first AC grant, allowing us to support members directly and to ensure compliance with all federal regulations. Our Director of AC Programs, Kristarae Flynn, oversees national grant management regulations and member support structures. She came to RP in 2010 after serving as the Director of Community Development at Public Allies, where she supervised ACMs and partnerships in San Francisco. Our AC Program Managers (ACPMs), Jeremy Exell and Brittany Prince, manage partnerships with CaliforniaVolunteers, National Direct, and VISTA grants in 3 CNCS state offices. Jeremy served with AmeriCorps NCCC and as a VISTA. Most recently, he managed member outreach for AmeriCorps Alums in Washington, D.C. Brittany was an ACM at RP as a Site Coordinator for 2 years before being promoted to this position. Jeremy and Brittany provide another level of knowledge, accessibility, and support for members beyond their direct supervisor. Members

Narratives

are encouraged to reach out to their ACPM with any questions or concerns about AC or their service year. Jeremy, the ACPM based in Washington, D.C., would manage this grant.

As a national program, RP has a staffing and organizational structure that has proven to be effective over the past 5 years as an AC program in 6 states across the country. A full-time RP Program Manager is responsible for overseeing a portfolio of 5-6 school sites and their SCs. RP PMs are experienced educators who in addition to being experts in elementary education must have professional experience coaching and supervising adults. PMs are also responsible for managing relationships with each school's principal and administration to ensure the achievement of strong outcomes in student learning. Since our model relies on volunteer tutors, RP has a robust Outreach team comprised of full-time Outreach Managers (OMs) who supervise 2-4 Outreach Coordinators (OCs). OCs recruit volunteers for 6-10 school sites in their portfolio. Managers conduct twice-monthly trainings for their members to enhance their knowledge of best practices in education, as well as volunteer recruitment and management techniques. Maryland managers report to Mid-Atlantic Regional Executive Director (RED), Lisa Lazarus, based in Washington, D.C.

The Mid-Atlantic RED works closely with the Baltimore regional board as well as with the national board of directors. Specifically, Lisa meets with the national office to set fund development goals and ensures that these goals are consistently met or exceeded. Lisa coordinates RP's relationship with school districts and spearheads the process of selecting and launching new reading centers. She also develops local fundraising initiatives to ensure regional sustainability. Prior to joining RP, Lisa was the Director of Effective Practice and Leadership Development for New Leaders, working with programs in Baltimore and DC. Lisa graduated summa cum laude from Princeton University, earned her Masters in Elementary Education from Lesley University and the Shady Hill School Teacher Training Course, and earned her Masters in Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

Our program in Baltimore is currently fully staffed and does not have any vacancies for full-time staff members. The only positions that will need to be filled are new AC positions for next year. Currently, 3 out of our 5 Maryland AC members are planning to apply for another year of service with RP. The main qualifications for these positions are: Excellent constituent relations skills (volunteers, teachers, parents) and a positive attitude; detail-oriented with strong organizational skills; ability to manage multiple projects at once; experience and interest in working with elementary school-age children; ability to express oneself clearly, in written and verbal forms; working knowledge of and ability to follow structured RP literacy curriculum; at least 17 years of age and a US Citizen or Permanent

Narratives

Resident.

RP provides both initial and ongoing support to full-time staff members in the realm of financial and programmatic orientation and technical assistance. Initial support constitutes a week long Program Orientation each July to train new and returning staff on RP culture, structure, and expectations. Trainings include an introduction to the RP program model, accounting policies, AC allowable expenses and timekeeping requirements, AC history and regulations, and best practices of managing ACMs. During the year, Program staff participates in bi-weekly conference calls to preview upcoming program events, review AC regulations and procedures, and share management techniques and problem-solving strategies.

Describe the organization's capacity to provide training and skills development for members: Following Orientation, members are given the training schedule for the year. Trainings take place every other Friday and are facilitated by managers or an outside expert in the topic. Training topics are aligned to happenings in the program calendar in order to provide ACMs with the most helpful and relevant skill set for that time period. In addition to the topics listed in Member Training, other topics include: CPR/AED, Disaster Preparedness, The Five Domains of Literacy, Working with English Language Learners (ELLs), Cultural Awareness, Engaging Families, Learning Styles and Childhood Development, Stewarding Partnerships, and Professional Communication with Difficult Conversations. Using online survey tools, RP has the capacity to survey and analyze member feedback for each of these trainings, enabling us to improve the training calendar and topics year over year.

Spearheading our various evaluation efforts is our Research and Evaluation Department, led by Senior VP of Research and Evaluation Dean Elson and staffed by Director of Curriculum Lindsay Barrett and Data/Research Manager Rebecca Sutherland. The department's responsibility falls into two domains: planning and supervising our annual cycle of internal program assessments and acting as liaison with external evaluators. As exemplified by the successful execution of the Stanford University School of Education study as well as the two external evaluations for two Social Innovation Fund grants currently underway (a nationwide randomized controlled study in partnership with MDRC and an implementation study taking place in Colorado), RP is equipped with in-house expertise to follow through on multiple evaluation projects at a time. Consequently, RP is well positioned to execute the evaluation requirements of AmeriCorps.

RP has five years of experience managing ACMs, as well as managing multiple federal grants in the same program year. In 2012-13, we are supervising 112 full time ACMs in the following combination

Narratives

of AC grants: 63 FT slots through CaliforniaVolunteers, 18 FT slots with National Direct (5 placed in MD), 10 slots with CA VISTA, 6 slots with NY VISTA, 5 slots with TX VISTA, and 10 FT Education Award Program slots. We currently also manage two CNCS Social Innovation Fund (SIF) grants this year - one through the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation and one from the Mile High United Way. In 2011-12, RP managed a 40-MSY National Direct (ND) grant, a 33-MSY CaliforniaVolunteers grant and a 6-member VISTA grant in CA. In 2010-11, RP secured a CaliforniaVolunteers grant and also served as a host site. We managed 33 members through CV with a retention rate of 94%. In 2009-10, we managed 18 members as a host site for three different agencies in CA. In 2008-09, we managed 8 members as a host site.

b. SUSTAINABILITY

RP's traditional fundraising strength has been in foundation relations. In Maryland, that tradition is evident as the following foundations that have made a leading investment in our program: Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Abell Foundation, the Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc., and the Foundation for Maryland's Future. We work closely with our foundation partners to discuss our future plans and ensure sustainable growth. As we expand, we are also diligently working to expand non-philanthropic partnerships such as our current collaboration with Baltimore City Public Schools, Johns Hopkins University, Business Volunteers Unlimited of Maryland, the Baltimore Mayor's Service office and the Family League of Baltimore City. In regards to in-kind resources, our school partners donate classroom space for us to use for our reading centers. These in-kind donations of space are crucial to our program design. In Baltimore for FY13, we have nearly \$50,000 already committed and roughly \$50,000 pledged. Volunteer recruitment partners are also vital to our current and future operations. To maintain a stable pipeline of tutors, we seek out relationships with work-study programs, employee engagement programs, and civic volunteerism opportunities that we know will have long-term potential. Our volunteer recruitment partners include: Senior Corps RSVP, UMBC Shriver Center, Johns Hopkins University, and Urban Alliance. While some RP tutors are RSVP members, RP does not include them in volunteer numbers or hours, as this is what RSVP reports to CNCS. We have clear expectations set with RSVP to ensure we do not double count services reported to CNCS.

RP recognizes that in order to sustain our impact in the community we need to cultivate a local, loyal, and long-term base of funders and champions. Furthermore, we recognize that we must build a diversified network of individual, corporate, and foundation supporters that can complement the ebbs and flows of one another. With the guidance of RP's development staff, our Mid-Atlantic RED is

Narratives

currently engaged in building this network so that no single grant expiration threatens our operations. A major priority for our RED is to build her local board of directors, which we see as an integral piece to raising our regional profile, to connecting with potential corporate partners, and to executing future individual giving campaigns. Beyond our efforts to secure our impact from the funding perspective, we are also dedicated to fortifying the community's interest and involvement in public education. RP volunteers become advocates for increased citizen involvement in public education as they share their tutoring experiences with friends and families tutoring and realize that student achievement is a shared responsibility, not the sole duty of teachers or principals alone. RP surveys showed that 85% of volunteers are more interested in public education issues after their service, and 90% intended to continue volunteering in their community.

RP ensures that stakeholder meetings take place with appropriate community members and organizations to make certain that everyone is aware of the issues our communities face. For example, in early December 2012, RP hosted its official Maryland launch event at a partner school. This event was attended by the Mayor, the Superintendent of Baltimore City Public Schools and many school and community leaders. The primary purpose for this event was to raise awareness around the need for community investment in schools, and to thank and acknowledge the volunteers and funders who are already supporting this movement. The launch event was a success and we are confident that this support and collaboration will contribute to long-term sustainability.

RP's success depends on strong relationships with various other stakeholders as well, including principals/superintendents/teachers, volunteer partnerships, and families. Regular monthly meetings allow RP to maintain close communication with teachers and school district administration throughout the school year to ensure students receive maximum academic support. Through specialized training of our local community volunteer tutors, we align our instructional practices to mirror what the teachers are working on in the classroom and to reinforce what students are learning.

Other community partners include: educational institutions like high schools, universities and colleges; private foundations; corporations; and regional advisory boards. Our stakeholders donate their time, funds, and/or in-kind resources and RP guarantees and delivers results within a year.

c. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

RP holds itself accountable to compliance regulations by utilizing a Federal Grants Manual that outlines policies and procedures for all major federal grant regulations and deadlines, including CNCS and AC. RP holds itself accountable to instances of risk by conducting multiple internal audits each year in regards to member files, hours, health benefits, and payroll. For instance, the AC Program

Narratives

Director conducts a quarterly member file check for all AC grants to ensure that member files are complete and updated. The ACPM and AC Director meet on a quarterly basis to analyze and audit member hours and timesheets for accuracy and to determine if ACMs are on track to meeting their 1700 hour commitment. The accounting, development and AC department meet monthly to discuss each grant's fiscal progress, follow-up on upcoming grant program or fiscal deadlines, and announce updates of new CNCS regulations.

To hold members and service sites accountable to compliance regulations, RP trains members and staff on prohibited activities and acceptable conduct, followed by the signing of contracts. Principals sign MOUs that outline AC expectations. Staff, members, and partners receive training on the AC prohibited activities so they are able to recognize any violation of prohibited activities and report it to RP immediately. Tutors must sign a code of conduct that outlines relevant AC regulations before they can begin tutoring.

Members are required to ask their manager or ACPM if an activity they are unsure about is within compliance of the grant. Weekly site visits and formal check-ins by PMs and the ACPM allow RP to continually monitor site and member compliance. ACMs and managers receive a 2 hour timesheet training during Orientation focused on allowable and unallowable activities. Members submit bi-monthly time sheets that are checked and approved by managers and audited on a quarterly basis by the ACPM and AC Director. If there is any uncertainty about RP's compliance, the AC Program Manager will immediately seek advice and guidance from our GOSV Program Officer. RP has never been on corrective action status for any grant received and supports a culture of establishing strong communication with each of our grant Program Officers early on in the grant year.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

1. COST EFFECTIVENESS

RP is a very cost-effective approach for improving elementary literacy proficiency across Baltimore because our model leverages community volunteerism to increase instructional capacity at Title I elementary schools. By recruiting, training, and continuously coaching private citizens as reading tutors, RP is able to help many children receive individualized attention. Last year across all of our regions, 5,162 volunteers collectively donated over 120,000 hours of tutoring, which is valued at \$1.44M if we were to pay volunteers a \$12/hr tutor wage. With school, municipal, and state budgets forced to do more with less resources, RP is able to bring more personnel into schools without burdening school budgets. The RP model will cost Maryland's GOSV \$443 per child to increase his/her literacy skills, thereby altering his or her life trajectory. RP is also cost effective because we

Narratives

transform unused classroom space into reading centers at no additional cost to schools. Schools donate the use of classroom space, which we project to be worth \$72,000 from our Baltimore City Public School partners.

RP is requesting \$13,300 per MSY (10) and is not exceeding the maximum cost per MSY. We have requested the maximum cost per MSY because RP has a very high-touch supervision and professional development model, which we believe is critical to equipping our members with the skills they need to effectively engage the thousands of community volunteers that we do. We provide our members with an unusually high degree of support with a low program manager to member ratio (1:6 average).

RP's organizational funding sources break down as the following: 47% private foundations; 15% government (CNCS and AmeriCorps); 14% government (Social Innovation Fund and CNCS); 14% school fee-for-service; 5% corporate; 5% individuals. RP's operating budget is \$13,144,384 for FY13. The proposed RP Maryland project will cost approximately \$417,789, representing 3% of RP's total operating budget. \$133,000 from Maryland GOSV would represent 1% of RP's total operating budget. RP receives 15% of its revenue from CNCS and AmeriCorps; this includes our CaliforniaVolunteers, National Direct, and VISTA grants. We have a dedicated department for our relationship with AC and it is their charge to grow our collaborations with partner state commissions. RP received a \$3.5M Social Innovation Fund (SIF) investment from 2011-2014, administered by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (EMCF) for CNCS. SIF has allowed RP to scale nationally more quickly than previously anticipated. The investment focuses exclusively on capacity building and infrastructure development in areas such as research and development, evaluations, policy advocacy, and accounting and fundraising.

Maryland's GOSV funding would account for 31% of revenue for the RP Maryland project, and RP would raise the remaining \$284,789 (69% of total program cost). These remaining funds will be a combination of private philanthropy (foundation support, corporate giving, and individual donations) and fee-for-service and in-kind support from our school partners. Because of our success to date and growing presence in Maryland, RP is confident in our current and future ability to meet our local fundraising goals. Currently, we have raised 39% percent of our \$240,000 goal for FY13.

Private foundations and individuals: \$122,789. RP anticipates that our lead investors from FY13 will renew and/or increase their support in FY14. Our top FY13 foundation investors include: The Annie E. Casey Foundation (\$50,000); The Abell Foundation (\$25,000); Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc. (\$25,000); and the Wright Family Foundation (\$21,789). Additional foundation donors include: The Aaron and Lillie Strauss Foundation and the Shattuck Family Foundation. We are

Narratives

also working to build funding relationships with new partners such as the Junior League of Baltimore and the Baltimore Gas and Electric. In regards to individual giving, many of our tutors are also donors. Thus far in FY13, our tutors and local supporters have donated \$1,000 in cash or in-kind donations (e.g., books or office supplies), and we project that we will collect another \$1,000 from these sources in 2013-14.. We have hired additional development staff to focus on individual giving and are innovating our strategies to more precisely target our various stakeholders with giving potential.

To further build a network of individual contributors, the Mid-Atlantic RED is prioritizing the creation of an advisory board composed of local business, philanthropic, and civic leaders who are champions for education. Board members are a crucial component of our special events strategy. In addition to helping raise the RP profile across Baltimore City, board members will be donors and tutors themselves and ultimately facilitate a major gifts campaign.

School fee for service and in-kind: \$162,000. To demonstrate their investment in our program, RP school partners contribute fee-for-service, which is expected to be approximately \$90,000 (\$15,000 per school). This figure accounts for 21.5% of our overall RP Maryland budget in 2013-14. RP expects private philanthropy to be at least \$122,000, accounting for 29.2% of the RP Maryland project in 2013-14. In addition to our philanthropic and fee-for-service revenues, RP also has significant in-kind resources. To operate our program, we ask each school partner to donate classroom space that we can transform into our reading centers. RP expects the value of this donated space to be roughly \$72,000, 17% of the RP Maryland budget.

These conservative projected cash and in-kind donations are currently \$284,789, far exceeding our required match goal to manage and operate the RP Maryland program.

A highly cost effective model for improving elementary literacy, RP most significant cost is personnel. In 2013-14, 66% of our Maryland budget will go towards personnel. RP invests in personnel because our ability to help students make measurable and lasting gains in their reading achievement depends upon our tutors having the coaching, problem solving help, and instructional resources they need to be effective. Accordingly, our model requires ample staff to maintain low staff-to-member and member-to-tutor ratios and to provide an individualized level of support. Each school site has at least one dedicated full-time ACM to manage tutoring and we limit our PMs to a maximum of six schools to supervise. To attract and retain passionate and engaged staff, RP intentionally offers ACMS more than the minimum living allowance required by CNCS and prioritizes ACM coaching.

While personnel may be our largest cost, the present and future benefit that we accord to minority

Narratives

and/or children from low-income communities merits the expense. According to RP data, 89% of students who participated in RP in 2011-12 accelerated their rate of learning, gaining an average of 1.6 months of skills for every one month of tutoring (compared to only gaining .6 skill-months for every month spent in school prior to enrollment in RP).

A growing number of nonprofit organizations are committed to improving youth literacy rates. Jumpstart for Young Children, Everybody Wins!, and READ Alliance are examples of organizations committed to improving youth literacy rates that deploy volunteers to help emerging readers solidify their skills. However, RP is the only scaled nonprofit in the US with its program model: the complete package of in-school, one-on-one literacy instruction by volunteers who are trained and supported by staff and ACMs, while working in close partnership with school staff and teachers. RP is unique compared to other literacy nonprofits because our program offers full-time integration into each school's space, schedule, and culture rather than being an after-school or part-time only support. Because we offer eight to nine hours of on-site programming Monday through Thursday, RP is able to serve 40-75 students per school with reliable, yearlong instruction. Moreover, RP directly increases the quantity of literacy resources in our partner schools, as well as the personnel required to guide students through those resources. We equip our school partners with a dedicated full-time member, a multi-leveled and research-based curriculum, two additional libraries, and a data collection cycle that augments teachers' knowledge of their students' strengths and needs. Compared to other organizations working in this field, RP is the only one that offers such a comprehensive package of resources and support. Finally, because our program model is more intensive than other organizations, our outcomes are stronger. No other program can deliver evidence-based results at a low cost, while efficiently utilizing a low number of ACMs. Our performance measure model makes it clear and simple to report our outcomes to our state commissions and CNCS. RP was invited by CNCS in December to present at the national conference in 2013. RP has been identified as a strong program model for reporting outcomes and we plan to share our process in creating strong performance measures and the tools we use to determine accurate results.

To execute our program, we rely on a budget model that maximizes the cost benefit to our school partners. By leveraging private philanthropy and AC dollars, RP will match Maryland's GOSV grant at 68.17%. With this cost model, schools receive literacy intervention services for 40-75 students without having to extend their already tight budgets. Schools are jumping at this opportunity, with a national waitlist of over 175 schools. Moreover, RP is free to students and constitutes no additional costs to families.

Narratives

2. BUDGET ADEQUACY

RP utilized Maryland's GOSV Sample AC program budget template, as that mirrors our program operating costs to provide clear planning for all RP Maryland AC expenses. The budget takes all AC and Maryland GOSV requirements into account, while building in the programmatic needs of RP. To align with the narrative, we invested 66% of our Maryland budget into our personnel including staff and ACMs, allowing RP to be fully staffed and provide a high level of program oversight at each placement site. We offer our Maryland ACMs more than the minimum living allowance required by CNCS, as well as go beyond the minimum health benefit requirements. RP has created project budgets for new AC regions for three years, so we are familiar with requirements and true costs. RP has continuously met and exceeded our contracted match requirement with our state and national AC grants, proving the adequacy of our past AC budgets. This budget template is similar in expenses and has proven to support our record of meeting all of our Performance Measures on all AC grants. The 2013-14 budget for the RP Maryland project is \$417,789. In addition to Maryland GOSV funding of \$133,000, RP will match \$284,789 to support this project. For this particular budget, RP budgeted for the following major expenses: 1: Personnel Salary and Benefits (\$88,183); 2: Staff Travel to Maryland GOSV and CNCS events and trainings (\$220); 3: Member Travel (\$275); 4: Member Gear (\$400); 5: Supplies and equipment such as books and Emergency Preparedness Kits for centers (\$775); 6: Member Training Costs for disaster preparedness training, RP recommended CPR Certification Training, and facilitators for Cultural Awareness and Resume/Interview Skill trainings (\$1,100 with Staff Training as an additional \$90); 7: Fingerprinting Costs for all staff and members; volunteers are fingerprinted for free through the school district (\$780); 8: Rent (\$72,000); 9: Member living allowance, FICA, Worker's Compensation, and Health, Vision and Dental coverage (\$189,936); 10: Federally Approved 18.1% Indirect Cost Rate (\$64,030). These expenses total \$417,789.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

N/A

Narratives

Continuation Changes

N/A