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Executive Summary

The AmeriCorps ACCESS Project (AmeriCorps Cross Cultural Education Service Systems) of the Center for New North Carolinians (CNNC) of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), proposes to place 64 AmeriCorps members from diverse backgrounds to serve immigrants/refugees, also referred to as clients, by providing them with employment services, interpretation services, disaster preparedness education and leveraging volunteers. Activities will occur in immigrant communities served by the partner agencies, also referred to as PAs, and at health & human service agencies across NC. The project begins Sept. 1, 2013 and the first program year will end Aug. 31, 2014. Projected outcomes include 150 clients obtaining jobs; 2100 professional interpreting services provided, 125 clients gaining knowledge of disaster preparedness, and 4000 hours of community service provided by member leveraged volunteers. This project will focus on CNCS focus areas of Economic Opportunity, Disaster Services, Capacity Building and Healthy Futures. The CNCS investment of \$541,698 will be matched with \$546,321 of cash and in-kind support.

Rationale and Approach

a. NEED: ACCESS selected to serve the immigrant/refugee population for several reasons. First, over the last three decades NC has experienced a dramatic increase of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) speakers. Second, the influx of these groups rendered service providers unable to provide meaningful access to services limiting their ability to become self-sufficient. Lastly, AmeriCorps members from the targeted communities enhance PAs capacity to provide culturally competent service as well as provide leadership opportunities for those members.

The 2010 Census reported over 800,000 Hispanics living in NC, which accounts for 25% of the state's population growth over the last two decades. Simultaneously, NC is ranked number 10 in states for refugee resettlement. Building on its history of refugee resettlement, NC resettled tens of thousands of refugees in the last decade, including such diverse populations as Iraqis, Burmese -- especially tribal groups, Bhutanese (Nepali descent), Liberians, Congolese, other Central African refugees, and smaller populations from other troubled areas of the world. NC is also the primary resettlement site for Montagnards, tribal peoples from Vietnam who continue to be persecuted because of their past affiliation with the US Army and their religious beliefs.

Newcomers represent a variety of cultures, languages, and needs, often including war-related trauma (Tsai, J. H., 2006, Journal of Nursing Scholarship). They provide economic contributions to the state but also place a strain on traditional educational and social service institutions. There is a shortage of

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professionally trained people able to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. At the same time, many of the newcomers have special needs because of isolation, language and cultural barriers, and war trauma.

This demographic shift is documented in an anthropology text edited by Elzbieta Gozdziaik *Beyond the Gateway: Immigrants in a Changing America* (2005). The chapter "New Immigrant Communities in the NC Piedmont Triad: Integration Issues and Challenges," by Dr. Raleigh Bailey, uses the Piedmont Triad as an example of the dramatic increase of immigrants who resettle in cities across the country where jobs are available instead of resettling in the traditional gateway cities like New York, Los Angeles, and other border cities. NC rural and urban areas are facing a dramatic shift in demographics with new immigrants in need of human services and constructive integration into local communities, but with local communities lacking culturally and linguistically appropriate resources to respond to these newcomers. These new populations have historically needed job training and placement, interpretation, awareness of resources such as disaster preparedness; and the agencies who serve them have needed increased capacity to meet these needs.

Employment: The needs of economically disadvantaged immigrants/refugees to obtain employment include: learning basic English language, education and technology skills, and attaining necessary cultural competency associated with pre/post- employment (Sienkiewicz, H. et al, *Work In Press, Untapped Resources: Refugee Employment Experiences in Central North Carolina*; Yakushko, O. et al, 2008, *Journal of Career Development*; Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants/Refugees, 2003). According to the Pew Hispanic Center, in 2010 the unemployment rate in the U.S. was 9.6%, in NC it was 12.6% and 14% for Hispanics. The median annual personal earnings of Hispanics were \$17,500. Refugees arrive without jobs or information on how to obtain jobs. One of the most frequently cited barriers to gainful employment is English language comprehension (Sienkiewicz, et al; Yakushko, et al). Even individuals with degrees or professional certifications from their country of origin struggle to find any type of employment after arrival to the U.S. due to challenges of communication skills. Many clients have limited or no access to formalized education in their countries of origin. Thus, they may lack rudimentary reading, writing, and math skills in their own language. French-speaking African refugees in Sienkiewicz's study stated "we didn't know how to fill out the application. That was a big problem for a lot of refugees...the form, the application." Cultural differences pose an additional challenge (Grantmakers). Some differences not understood include the importance of a firm handshake, making eye contact, the significance of body language, the value of punctuality, and their role as an employee (Sienkiewicz, et al). Many immigrant &

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refugee cultures believe that making eye contact with authority figures is disrespectful. These subtle cultural differences can create barriers to obtaining employment (Yakushko, et al).

Other barriers include having limited or no experience using computers or other electronic machinery. Technological skills are being required for seeking and applying for employment, as well as on the job (Tsai). Electronics such as computers, calculators, and other machinery as well as systems for signing in and out of work, and other machinery are commonly used in many workplaces. Spanish-speaking households, and immigrants in general, are less likely to have access to and use a computer and the internet than native populations, with poor English skills playing a significant role in this gap (Ono, H. & Zavondny, M., 2008, Social Forces). Therefore, having access to educational opportunities removes a significant barrier to employment for newcomers.

Interpretation: The need for professionally trained interpreters to help bridge communications between health & human service providers and immigrants/refugees is critical to the well-being of these populations (Dharod., et al, Work In Press, Life style, food and health related challenges refugee groups face upon resettlement: Do we have to move beyond job and language training programs?; Flores, G., et al, 2003, Pediatrics). Compared to mainstream society, challenges immigrants/refugees face in accessing health & human services involve transportation, navigating systems, quality of care, access to insurance, and meeting eligibility requirements. Beyond these obstacles, language and cultural issues continue to be one of the most cited barriers to adequate health care (Dharod, et al). According to Flores, et al, most hospital interpreters do not receive adequate training, fewer than one fourth of hospitals provide any training for medical interpreters and only 14% of U.S. hospitals provide training for volunteer interpreters. According to a 1999 report by the Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health & Social Services, the use of untrained interpreters, including family/friends, resulted in sufficiently higher error rates as to make their use more dangerous in some cases than no interpreter at all.

Language and cultural barriers often lead to miscommunication between clients and providers, which can result in detrimental consequences (Dharod, et al). Clients may be unable to fully express their needs, understand the full extent of their circumstances, be knowledgeable about the procedures and documentation needed to obtain services, understand the importance of deadlines, and the consequences of not following instructions. Without awareness and understanding of a culture's values and norms, it is difficult to communicate effectively and easy to misunderstand or make inaccurate assumptions about actions and intentions. This affects providers, educators, and clients all of whom are trying to be active and contributing members of the community. In a study by Dharod,

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et al, one Montagnard participant said, "[Montagnards] do not know what to ask and where to ask, they go to emergency when too sick, come back from hospital with papers but no idea, what to do. They often come to me asking me what should I do with this....I explain them, you have to go to pharmacy to get medicine, explain when to take it, they have no idea, when to meet doctor."

Participants, who were former physicians in their country of origin, reported that U.S. doctors often did not have any idea about the refugees' cultural background, which caused problems with communication and prognosis. When asked what would help their community improve their health care, 60% of participants suggested having in-person interpreters in tribal languages would be helpful because it would reduce the language barriers and serve as an outlet for disseminating health care information (Dharod, et al).

The use of untrained interpreters can lead to miscommunication and a lack of understanding for both clients and service providers. A study by Flores, et al documented that ad hoc, or untrained, interpreters have a higher incidence of errors in communication, including omission, substitution, and addition of information, as well as editorialization and incorrect word or phrase usage than professionally trained interpreters. Additionally, in a study by Ngo-Metzger, et al, participants preferred trained interpreters instead of family members due to alternated power dynamic and lack of availability (2003, Populations at Risk).

The use of professionally trained interpreters in various health & human service settings can alleviate communication problems experienced by clients and their providers. Professionally trained interpreters are identified as the link to mainstream society because they can understand and interpret language and culture. Clients rely on them to facilitate communication in various settings, such as schools, clinics, social service agencies and employment services.

Disaster Preparedness: Immigrants/refugees are more likely to be ill-prepared for emergency situations than mainstream populations due to language barriers, transportation issues, and lack of disaster preparedness awareness (Xin, H., et al, Work In Press, Vietnamese Refugees' Resilience: Resources for Coping with Natural Disasters in their Host Country). LEP populations generally are not accustomed to prepare for disasters as formal disaster preparedness programs may not be a part of their cultures. It may be more culturally customary for these populations to respond to disasters, rather than prepare for them (Ton, H., 2004, American Psychiatric Association). In Xin's study done with Vietnamese and Montagnard refugees participants expressed concerns about dealing with a disaster in the U.S. Many do not have access to T.V.s or radios and those who do, often do not understand the language, but instead recognize the typical weather icons. Additionally, clients cite not

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knowing local disaster response protocols or agencies that can assist (Xin, et al; Blazer, J. & Murphy, B., 2008, National Immigration Law Center). Several participants in the study stated they would call a friend or call 911 during a weather related disaster. Participants cited having received some basic training once or twice but they had already forgotten most of the information. For these reasons, clients need to receive ongoing culturally relevant information and training in preparing for disasters, recognizing emergency procedures and protocols, and developing disaster response plans.

Volunteer Recruitment: Due to economic hardship, many nonprofit agencies that serve immigrants/refugees need volunteers more than ever in order to continue to provide programming. As a result of funding cuts and lower donations, agencies have had to lay-off staff, which often results in reduction of services to the community (Hopkins, K., et al, 2012, Journal of Community Practice). The decreased capacity directly affects immigrants/refugees. Agencies that serve these populations will benefit from increased volunteer recruitment & management as a means to maintain and enhance the level of services they provide (Urban Institute, 2004, Volunteer Management Capacity in America's Charities and Congregations: A Briefing Report).

According to the first national study of volunteer management capacity, conducted by the Urban Institute and organized by the UPS Foundation, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the USA Freedom Corps in 2004, a significant barrier to successful volunteer programs is the inability to dedicate staff resources to adapt best practices in volunteer management. In another study, agencies reported that insufficient budgets limited their ability to retain volunteers because they were not able to hire volunteer coordinators (Behnia, B. 2008, Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies). ACCESS members who provide culturally competent training and coordination to volunteers are able to fill those gaps, without straining already limited PA resources. In addition, potential volunteers within client communities can be recruited (Behnia, B.). Volunteers with agencies that do not have immigrants/refugees on staff may feel discouraged from staying with the agency (Behnia, B.).

b. AMERICORPS MEMBERS AS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SOLVE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS: Reduced funding often limits the number of staff at an agency, thus impacting the quantity of clients served and/or quality of services provided. Volunteers may not make the long-term commitment required to provide consistent services. This makes ACCESS members highly effective resources for PAs. Member activities will vary by PA, but typical service descriptions will include primary activities such as: employment readiness and placement services (i.e. employment coaching, English language acquisition activities, etc.), interpretation and translation to support health &

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human services provision, disaster preparedness education, and volunteer recruitment & management. Additional services include referral to human services in native languages; citizenship education; program development; and limited fund raising in accordance with CNCS and State Commission guidelines. For example, members providing employment coaching will assist clients with completing job applications, resume building, job searches, employment skills, etc. Professionally trained, bilingual members will interpret for clients on medical visits, social service appointments, school enrollment, etc. Members leveraging volunteers will attend recruitment fairs, seek partnerships with local universities, provide initial orientations, and manage volunteers onsite.

ACCESS seeks three categories of members: 28 full-time, 16 part-time, and 20 quarter-time education award only, or EAO (described as CEO's -- Citizenship Education Organizers -- in promotional materials). This allows for a diversity of members: full-time members can make this experience their major commitment for a year, often recent college graduates; part-time members combine this opportunity with other work to support their families; and CEO's, often college students who combine their service with internships or retirees who are not dependent on this experience for income. The variety of slots allows PAs to recruit members and design program activities, in accordance with ACCESS Performance Measures (PMs), that accommodate different time commitments of members and to seek CEO's which do not require a cash match from the agency.

c. EVIDENCE-BASED/EVIDENCE --INFORMED & MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT:

Employment - Intervention: Members will complete training in employment and placement services, designed specifically to meet the needs of the immigrants/refugees in job attainment. Members will provide culturally competent services to clients including, but not limited to: case management (contacting potential employers, developing an employment plan, skills assessment, reviewing work/educational history, obtaining necessary documents), transportation (to/from job interviews), applying for jobs (résumé writing, cover letters), learning computer skills (completing an application online, job searches), teaching English as a Second Language (ESOL) classes, facilitating educational enhancement (obtaining information about educational options, assisting with admissions/financial aid applications), and practicing mock interviews (importance of timeliness, eye contact, firm handshake, etc) (Grantmakers; Potocky-Tripodi, M. 2008, Journal of Social Service Research; Sinekiwicz, H., et al; Yakushko, O. et al). Assisting an immigrant/refugee to develop a repertoire of job-searching skills cannot be underestimated as one of the most significant contributors to gaining employment, developing a career path, and a positive transition into a new culture (Grantmakers; Yakushko, O. et al). Research evaluating similar job training programs (Job Corps and TANF) cited

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interventions serving LEP persons are most effective when they include access to ESOL, job training, enhancing education, and employment services (Flores-Lagunes, A., et al. 2007. Institute for the Study of Labor; Tumlin, K & Zimmermann, W. 2003. The Urban Institute). Similarly, the Office of Refugee Resettlement Match Grant program (Department of Health & Human Services) reported a self-sufficiency success rate of 71% for eligible clients in FY 2011 using interventions that consisted of case management, employment services and language acquisition.

Community Impact: By year three of the grant cycle ACCESS members will provide 4500 immigrants/refugees with job services and place 525 in jobs. PM targets were chosen through discussion with PAs, which provide employment services. The impact will be measured by data aggregated from Monthly Activity Logs.

Interpretation - Intervention: Bilingual members will complete a two-day Professional Interpreter Training, and as trained interpreters, will have less of a chance of error than unqualified interpreters (Wilson-Stronks, A. & Galvez, E., 2007, The Joint Commission & the California Endowment). The curriculum used was created by the CNNC Interpreter ACCESS Project (IAP) using the National Standards of Practice for Interpreters in Health Care, produced by the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC). The 9 principles and 32 standards were developed through an intensive two-year process that utilized research-based evidence, 10 other documented interpreter training curricula, consultation with an expert advisory committee, and feedback from interpreters, trainers and administrators from all over the country (National Standards for Healthcare Interpreter Training Programs, 2011, NCIHC). Interpreters adhering to the NCIHC Code of Ethics & Standards set national standards for qualified interpreters in many circles (Wilson-Stronks). The CNNC-IAP curriculum is currently being used by the NC Area Health Education Centers. From this training, ACCESS members learn that their roles as professional interpreters are to act as conduits, cultural brokers, clarifiers, and advocates, as accepted in the professional interpreting field. Through interpretation, they help bridge communication between immigrants/refugees and service providers. Trained members will provide interpretation services to clients in various health & human services settings. ACCESS will measure the level of satisfaction of clients who receive interpretation services from trained members. Level of satisfaction with health & human services is defined as having service-related questions answered, having a better understanding of information being given by the service providers, and clearer communication.

Community Impact: By year three of the grant cycle ACCESS members will provide 12,000 interpretation services will be provided and 600 individuals receiving interpretation services will be

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surveyed with 75% reporting an increased level of satisfaction. PM targets were based on previous years' data. The impact will be measured by data aggregated from Monthly Activity Logs and Client Satisfaction Surveys.

Disaster Preparedness - Intervention: Members will complete disaster preparedness & response trainings, translate disaster related materials, and provide CNCS-supported services in disaster preparedness to immigrants/refugees (Xin, et al; Blazer). Members will arrange and conduct disaster preparedness (DP) workshops and disseminate DP literature in various languages to clients, as well as providing or arranging for interpretation as needed. Workshop materials used for trainings have been evaluated by Guilford County Emergency Management Services (EMS). As needed, members will assist local EMS with interpretation services, translation of disaster related materials, and guidance for DP programs on culturally competent ways to reach immigrants/refugees (Xin, et al; Blazer).

Community Impact: By year three of the grant cycle ACCESS members will provide 600 clients with DP services and 450 will demonstrate an increase in knowledge. PM targets were based on previous years' data. The impact will be measured by data aggregated from Monthly Activity Logs and pre/post-tests.

Volunteer Recruitment & Management - Intervention: ACCESS members will complete volunteer recruitment, retention, and management training. The training utilizes the CNCS Volunteer Management online training course. According to the Urban Institute report, one of the most utilized capacity-building options among agencies with social service outreach is the addition of a one-year full-time volunteer with a living stipend [like an AmeriCorps member], whose responsibility it is to recruit and manage volunteers. The report goes on to say that in agencies that face challenges in recruiting sufficient numbers of volunteers with the necessary skills, or who do not have the staff resources to train and supervise volunteers, AmeriCorps members could be particularly useful.

Members will set-up volunteer management programs at their sites, thus increasing PA capacity to serve clients during a time of financial hardship (Urban Institute; Hopkins, K., et al; Behnia, B.).

Members will target recruitment of volunteers from specific groups that are motivated by the desire to provide community service, including recruitment from client communities. Two identified age groups include students, high school and college, and senior citizens. Schools are promoting community service as an integral part of coursework and senior citizens have their own internal desire to maintain a level of involvement to "give back".

Community Impact: By year three of the grant cycle volunteers will have performed 24,000 hours of community service and 10 PAs annually will report that capacity building increased their

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effectiveness. PM targets were based on previous years' data. The impact will be measured by data aggregated from Monthly Activity Logs and Pre/Post Organizational Assessments.

FOR CURRENT GRANTEEES OR FORMER GRANTEEES: Data from the last full program year demonstrates that ACCESS successfully met all targets for PMs. ACCESS had a tremendous impact on immigrants/refugees in areas of health & human services. In the 2011-12 program year, members: (1) recruited 559 volunteers who provided 7776 hours of community service; (2) provided interpretation services to 1999 clients and provided 5161 interpretation services; (3) taught ESOL to 875 clients; and (4) conducted 12 DP workshops for 118 clients.

As of November in the 2012-13 program year, members have: (1) recruited 433 volunteers who provided 2,540 hours of community service; (2) provided 1242 interpretation services to 541 clients; and (3) provided employment services to 576 clients and placed 75 in jobs. Currently, ACCESS has no data to report on disaster preparedness services.

d. MEMBER RECRUITMENT: ACCESS has a long history of recruiting members from underrepresented populations. Additionally, ACCESS's Tips for Recruiting Bilingual an Ethnically Diverse Team is posted on the CNCS's EnCorps Resource Center website. Selection of members is based on cross cultural experience, interests, time availability, and skills needed by PAs. Members reflect a wide range of ages, educational backgrounds, ethnicities, and countries of origin. Members with cross cultural experience are preferred. Members are recruited from two primary groups but are not limited to those groups.

Legal permanent residents and U.S. citizens from new American families are an under-represented group targeted for selection because they are knowledgeable about and can provide access to their communities and who will benefit from the training they receive. ACCESS experience and staff history are a clear demonstration that this is a natural and appropriate group for recruitment. The other primary group is college students and recent college graduates. They are more likely to be receptive to challenging commitments and have an awareness of and are receptive to newcomer integration. ACCESS's location within UNCG with its pool of college students who serve as volunteers and interns make this an easy recruitment group. Many members are selected because they are bilingual and bicultural. Monolingual members are able to serve in other capacities. About half of the members will be from immigrant communities.

e. MEMBER TRAINING: Members attend a mandatory orientation on their first day of service, which includes an Introduction to Immigrants/Refugees, Policies/Procedures and Prohibited Activities for members/generated volunteers. ACCESS monitors members/generated volunteers'

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awareness/adherence to prohibited activities through communication with site supervisors and quarterly site visits. In the first month of service, members receive trainings on Diversity, Teaching ESOL, Professional Interpretation, and Employment Coaching & Placement. Over the next two months, members receive trainings on Volunteer Recruitment, Disabilities, Disaster Preparedness & Response, and Community Resources. In the second quarter of the program, members receive trainings on CPR/First Aid, Cross Cultural Communication, Conflict Resolution, Immigration Law, and Citizenship. In the third quarter of the program, members will receive Life After AmeriCorps training. Also, ACCESS requires PAs to provide site orientation to members within their first weeks of service. ACCESS also requires PAs to provide members placed at their sites with specific trainings needed to perform service activities. During their term of service, members will acquire skills in teaching English, professional interpreting, providing employment services, leveraging volunteers, disaster readiness, conflict resolution, first aid, civic engagement, and cross cultural communication.

f. MEMBER SUPERVISION: Members are placed at PAs where a designated site supervisor has been identified by the agency and undergone CNCS background checks. ACCESS requires that the site supervisor attend an orientation prior to the member start date. Direct supervision is provided by site supervisors at the PAs. Supervisors are required to attend quarterly trainings that cover topics including: Member Retention & Support, Leadership Development, Sustainability, Grant Writing, etc. ACCESS staff conducts quarterly site visits with members & supervisors to ensure both are receiving adequate support and guidance.

g. MEMBER EXPERIENCE: Program components: Members will be assigned a placement site with a nonprofit agency whose mission aligns with ACCESS goals, based on community needs, partner mission, and member skills and interests. Members are made aware from orientation that they are AC members placed at these sites and not agency staff. To ensure community impact and continued civic participation, ACCESS requires member engagement in "National Identity Days," special CNNC initiatives to assist target populations through food & clothing drives, ongoing trainings which reinforce the ethic of service, and other special statewide activities promoted by the NC Commission, which allows the opportunity for members to engage with other AmeriCorps/national service participants. ACCESS also provides members with national service gear. Members are placed in groups and are then responsible for working together to plan and implement service projects. Member reflection activities will be held quarterly.

* Disaster Preparedness and Response: ACCESS participates in the statewide Disaster Response Team (DRT) organized by the NC Commission. This will include at least 12 members as requested by the NC

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Commission. ACCESS will also notify site supervisors on the role of members in disaster alerts and how their agencies should cooperate in response to disaster preparedness and alerts. The DRT may be deployed in the case of a disaster. In the past, ACCESS has interpreted in disaster situations. Members are available to coach local programs in culturally competent ways to reach immigrant communities and communicate DP information to their local LEP communities as needed.

* Ongoing Dialogue and Activities Designed to Improve Race Relations: AmeriCorps ACCESS members reflect the diversity of the broader community, and activities are aimed at building bridges between the diverse newcomer communities and mainstream, long standing NC communities. The plan includes: diversity training topics around race relations; participation in statewide events such as National Identity Days; engaging mainstream communities in service projects with awareness events of immigrants/refugees; and assisting in the provision of cultural competency and race relations outreach efforts for the broader community and service agencies.

Part of the mission of ACCESS and CNNC is to promote an inclusive society and to ameliorate conflicts through cross cultural communication, awareness, and conflict resolution. Through ongoing volunteer generation and community outreach, members foster discussions and engage the broader community in activities aimed at improving race relations.

h. VOLUNTEER GENERATION: ACCESS members will complete volunteer recruitment, retention, and management training. ACCESS staff provide training to both members and supervisors on AmeriCorps prohibited activities for members and generated volunteers. Members will recruit volunteers and establish volunteer recruitment & management systems for PA and will train & manage volunteers to meet the needs of clients. Volunteer activities include, but are not limited to: providing childcare, social enrichment program for youth, social adjustment/ "befriending" refugees, administrative support, tutoring, cleaning at educational centers, setting up housing for newly arrived refugees, etc. Members will provide orientation, training, and ongoing support to generated volunteers on prohibited activities. While volunteers are mostly students, they represent an ethnic cross section of the community, including black, white and immigrant students in the area. In the past, these pools of immigrant and student volunteers have served as a strong resource for recruitment of members for the following year.

i. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION

ACCESS complies with CNCS requirements and uses the AmeriCorps name on all program materials, including: website, brochures, flyers, letterhead, member curriculum, etc. As part of the partnership agreement, ACCESS requires all PAs where members are placed to be clearly marked as an

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AmeriCorps site by placing a sign in a visible location. ACCESS members are required to identify themselves as AmeriCorps members at all times when in service by wearing their service gear. ACCESS ensures that sites and members are in compliance with this requirement through periodic site visits.

Organizational Capability

a. ORGANIZATIONL BACKGROUND & STAFFING: Mission & History: In 1994, after a statewide needs assessment conducted by Social Work faculty at UNCG in cooperation with refugee/immigrant networks & NC Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), Division of Social Services (DSS), Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), stakeholders confirmed the need for an AmeriCorps program to facilitate new immigrants' access to human services. Thus, ACCESS became the first AmeriCorps project in NC. Its overall mission is "to help refugees and immigrants and their communities gain better access to human services, build bridges of understanding with their neighbors, and become economically self-sufficient residents of our state."

Since inception, ACCESS has continued to grow and improve. In 2000, it became an AmeriCorps state competitive program with support from the NC Commission. In April 2001, the UNC Board of Regents authorized the UNCG CNNC to serve as a resource for the state university system on immigrant related issues. ACCESS and related activities served as the programmatic base for CNNC. During the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act initiative, CNNC also had a second AmeriCorps grant which focused on jobs for two refugee communities.

Management structure & staffing: ACCESS is a program of the CNNC which is housed in the Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED). This Office is a central hub for UNCG outreach & research, and CNNC has strong support through its placement & support systems. As part of UNCG, it operates under UNCG's board of directors and the UNC system's policies & procedures. CNNC also maintains a board of advisors who assist with programming issues. Those advisors include some directors of PAs, foundation staff, and immigrant community leaders. There is also an active cadre of CNNC Research Fellows who focus on community based research with immigrants, studying evidence based practices. They include academics who work with CNNC programs and community based professionals who work with immigrants. Fellows provide an additional source of programmatic advice and support.

The full time ACCESS Director, Khouan Rodriguez, with a bachelor's degree in sociology, is a refugee from Laos and a former ACCESS member. She has served as Director since 2004 and has direct responsibility for the project. Prior to this, she was CNNC Office Manager. The ACCESS Training

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Coordinator, Cynthia Mejia, with a bachelor's degree in sociology, is an immigrant from the Dominican Republic, was also an ACCESS member and has previous experience working with the Department of Social Services. She reports to Ms. Rodriguez, directly oversees training, and serves as acting director in Ms. Rodriguez's absence. Janet Johnson, Assistant Director of CNNC, has a bachelor's degree in business management. She is funded in part by ACCESS and has fiscal oversight and reporting responsibilities for ACCESS within CNNC, and also works closely with the UNCG Office of Contracts and Grants (C&G). She has over 30 years administrative experience with federally funded programs related to immigrants/refugees. Raleigh Bailey, Ph.D., is CNNC Director & Senior Research Scientist at UNCG. He has overseen ACCESS since its inception in 1994 and has over 25 years of experience with immigrants/refugees. He supervises Ms. Johnson and Ms. Rodriguez. His ACCESS time, focusing on community and program development as well as supervision, is counted as in-kind match. He reports to Dr. Terri Shelton, Vice Chancellor for ORED at UNCG. ACCESS is seeking to reinstate the Program Assistant position, which was eliminated in 2011 due to funding cuts. Primary qualifications include previous experience with AmeriCorps & immigrants/refugees, office administrative skills, and cross cultural knowledge.

Plans for providing financial and programmatic orientation are integrated into CNNC & UNCG procedures built on 18 years of successful AmeriCorps management. Because the staff is well seasoned and experienced, this will not be an issue. Training & technical assistance to staff is part of the UNCG and NC Commission ongoing professional development. The Commission sponsors ongoing staff development and training related to AmeriCorps, and UNCG provides staff training in fiscal & personnel management.

The ACCESS mission and goals are directed toward training & skill development for members, many of whom become professional leaders in the field of immigrant/refugee services. Member orientation begins with an intensive training experience and continues with regular trainings in the areas of program goals and skill area trainings, such as interpreting & teaching ESOL.

Program evaluation is a component of all CNNC grants. For large programs such as ACCESS, outside evaluators are secured from other units of the university to conduct independent evaluations.

Federal grants management capacity is well established. ACCESS has managed its AmeriCorps grant for 18 years. CNNC has had other federal grants in the past, and is currently participating in other federally funded outreach and UNCG research projects. UNCG managed \$13,860,760.00 in federal funds in the 2012 fiscal year. All CNNC funds are managed through the UNCG fiscal management systems of C&G and the Development Office.

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Currently CNNC has ten funding sources for immigrant related programs. In addition to ACCESS, these include: Immigrant Health ACCESS Project (Cone Foundation); Thriving at Three (United Way of Greater Greensboro); Newcomer CLASS (United Way of Greater Greensboro); Social Work Mental Health (KBR Reynolds Foundation), Lead Paint Education (City of Greensboro/HUD); Healthy Homes (City of Greensboro); Piedmont Together (HUD); Update of High Point (City of High Point/HUD); Serving Thriving Families (NC A&T State University/Kate B. Reynolds Foundation); Interpreter ACCESS Project (fee based). A majority of CNNC staff are ACCESS alumni. Most of these CNNC programs also have ACCESS members. CNNC has three community centers funded by several sources and served by ACCESS members. Presently, CNNC receives funds from UNCG to cover parts of three staff positions. ACCESS represents slightly less than half of the overall CNNC budget. ACCESS, is a unit of UNCG, which is an institution of the UNC system. The ORED mission focuses on civic engagement for the university. The UNCG Board of Directors has legal oversight of its programs including ACCESS & CNNC. However, CNNC has established an additional Board of Advisors who are appointed by the Vice Chancellor to provide programmatic support to the Center. All CNNC program and fiscal management operates through the UNCG management systems. Within CNNC, staff of all programs meet at least monthly to assure coordination of services. In addition, all staff are housed in the same space, assuring mutual support and communication. CURRENT GRANTEES ONLY: All existing CNNC service activities have been built on the ACCESS network and reputation. Most activities are linked to ACCESS, using the ACCESS system as a culturally competent outreach network. ACCESS serves as social capital & an indicator of capacity in grant applications to other funding sources.

ACCESS experience & accomplishments over the last 18 years has been one of steady growth and improvement. Over 90% enrollment and retention has been achieved almost every year. The current year shows 100% in both enrollment and retention. In addition, ACCESS has consistently met its performance goals most program years. Minor exceptions a few years ago were traced to reporting difficulties.

ACCESS has been a resource for the NC Commission. It has regularly used ACCESS as a management model for other AmeriCorps programs. ACCESS policies, procedures, & documentation forms are shared with other programs trying to improve their administrative structures. NC has called on ACCESS for assistance in outreach to immigrants regarding DP, including direct outreach assistance to Latinos in disaster areas and translation of DP documents in multiple languages. NC has used ACCESS as a vehicle for other programs as well. The State of NC initially contracted with

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ACCESS to promote outreach recruitment to immigrant communities for NC Health Choice when the state initiated its program. Agencies seeking information about or to contact immigrant communities are regularly referred to ACCESS and CNNC by various state and local government officials.

b. SUSTAINABILITY: In its 18 years, ACCESS has had 100% success in meeting its match and has also assisted PA in securing funds for their cash match obligations. ACCESS works closely with the UNCG Development Office and Office of Sponsored Programs in financial planning and engaging community stakeholders support for programs. ACCESS has several proven strategies for sustainability. The level of ACCESS PA responsibility has increased annually since the inception of the program as indicated by multiple measures. The community cash match provided by PAs has grown from \$2000 for a full time member to the new proposed annual rate of \$6,500 per full time member, with similar cash match growth for part time members. In addition, PAs report monthly on in-kind resources including member supervision time and office space. ACCESS has been successful in securing additional funding to support the AmeriCorps project. At least four foundations have helped to cover cash match requirements for ACCESS PAs in cooperation with CNNC, and other foundations are providing direct cash support to PAs to cover match requirements. Also, CNNC raises about \$500,000 annually in other funding sources that supplement ACCESS related initiatives. These currently include Immigrant Health ACCESS Project, Interpreter ACCESS Project, Lead Paint Outreach Project, and Thriving at Three Latino Family Support Project. As another sustainability strategy, CNNC is an approved United Way partner agency and receives United Way funding. CNNC also raises funds through its United Way partner relationship and through a special designation in the State Employees Combined Campaign annual fundraising. The UNCG Development Office assists with other fund raising initiatives, and some individuals make direct donations to CNNC programs through that system. CNNC works with local foundations such as the Community Foundation and the Weaver Foundation for special projects that help PAs raise their own cash match requirements for having members at their sites. Local faith groups contribute to the support of our three community centers. To assure sustainability and long range impact, UNCG ORED is currently assisting ACCESS in publicity and web based promotional activities to help assure ongoing institutional support. Simultaneously, ORED is helping cover some costs of CNNC staff to support ACCESS. The diversity of CNNC's programs and funding sources all contribute to the overall ACCESS mission of bridge building & economic self-sufficiency for clients.

ACCESS plans to ensure that the impact of the program in the community is sustainable beyond the grant period. Some early PAs were mainstream agencies such as health departments in which

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members provided interpreter services. ACCESS no longer provides member interpreters to health departments, but ACCESS alumni have been hired for staff positions. Those mainstream PAs are now being replaced by community based partners, such as Church World Service, World Relief, Reading Connections, and Latin American Coalition. ACCESS strengthens communities by assisting PAs in their development as sustainable nonprofit agencies. Some community based PAs were organized with reliance on ACCESS support, and members served as their key people in their formative periods. For example, the African Services Coalition (ASC) began as an ACCESS project and relied exclusively on AmeriCorps members for staffing. Now ASC, directed by a former member, is an independent nonprofit with independent federal funding for program services. Other PAs have similar stories. Several current PAs have special projects that were started through ACCESS, which have now become institutionalized in the agencies through separate funding and staffing. Trained ACCESS alums are a regular source for staffing new programs. CNNC has grown to the point that it provides immigrant outreach education for NC independent of its AmeriCorps funding. Senior staff develops diverse funding streams from the public & private sectors.

Through ACCESS members, many PAs now have volunteer management programs, which enable PAs to continue providing services to clients in the absence of AmeriCorps. Student volunteers provide service learning to the broader community. However, without ACCESS, developing and supporting immigrant community leadership for economic development and sustainability would be threatened. With the exception of a few sites that are traditional agencies, the majority of ACCESS's PAs are grassroots agencies. The current twenty plus PAs are central to the work of ACCESS. ACCESS consulted with PAs to set program goals and plan activities for the current proposal to address the needs of their communities. PA development and collaboration increases their institutional capacity and assures the long term sustainability of program goals beyond the direct service impact of ACCESS.

c. COMPLIANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY: ACCESS, including UNCG and PAs, traditionally achieves full compliance with AmeriCorps rules & regulations. ACCESS has an outstanding record in compliance and accountability based on 18 years of evidence based practice, state & UNCG grants management policies & procedures, and thorough systems of training & monitoring within CNNC. ACCESS's plans for monitoring program and service sites for compliance include: providing members & supervisors training on compliance issues, prohibited activities, and fundraising prior to the member's first day of service; providing members & supervisors with program manuals detailing AmeriCorps rules & regulations; reviewing member & supervisor monthly reports and following up as needed; and conducting quarterly site visits for monitoring. For example, during site visits, staff

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monitor for AmeriCorps signs to be placed in visible locations and for members wearing their gear. If incidences of risk or noncompliance are identified, staff follow up immediately with any members or site supervisors who need assistance or monitoring. ACCESS staff actively seek guidance from the NC Commission in adhering to all AmeriCorps guidelines. In the unlikely case of egregious noncompliance, UNCG can hold the PAs legally accountable, based on signed partner agreements between UNCG and ACCESS partner agencies.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: ACCESS has a long history of direct service through AmeriCorps. As an agency offering placements across the state, some members are placed in rural and resource poor communities. ACCESS targets at risk immigrant/refugee populations. Most of the targeted refugees are resettled in urban areas but are unemployed or underemployed. Many Latino immigrants are in rural areas, underemployed, and subject to major discrimination. ACCESS leverages resources from affluent areas and philanthropic agencies in urban areas to assist rural areas as feasible.

FOR CURRENT GRANTEES & FORMER GRANTEES ONLY: Demonstrated Compliance: ACCESS, UNCG, and PAs were in compliance during the last full year of program operation.

Enrollment: In the 2011-12 program year, ACCESS had an enrollment rate of 100%.

Retention: In the 2011-12 program year, the retention rate for ACCESS was 88%. The loss of members was due to various reasons including economic hardships, personality conflict with site supervisor, personal compelling circumstance, and other personal issues. In an effort to promote retention ACCESS has revised the training plan from weekends to training during the service week. Reducing weekend commitments allows members more downtime. ACCESS continues to have an open door policy to provide ongoing member support. ACCESS also provides training to site supervisors on how to better support members during the service year. In addition, ACCESS continues to make members feel that they play a significant role and are part of a large AmeriCorps family by publicly celebrating and recognizing their birthdays and personal & professional accomplishments.

FOR MULTI-STATE APPLICANTS ONLY: N/A

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

a. **COST EFFECTIVENESS:** The proposed Corporation Cost per MSY for the planned grant cycle is \$13,119, which is below the maximum cost per MSY. This amount is also lower than the cost per MSY at which ACCESS has been previously funded. Over the last five years, ACCESS has received state competitive & state formula funding totaling \$3,107,377.

Comparable costs for FTE (or MSY) positions would begin around \$25,000 plus fringe/position. A

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primary service ACCESS provides is professionally trained health interpretation. PAs would pay in the range of \$40-\$60 per hour or higher for contract interpreters. ACCESS members receive the equivalent of \$7.12/hour.

The CNNC organizational funding is derived from: HUD, United Way of Greater Greensboro, Community Foundation, City of Greensboro, City of High Point, Cone Foundation, Kate B. Reynolds Foundation, UNCG -- ORED, and NC A&T University. In addition, CNNC has one fee-based program. The proposed ACCESS budget represents 36% of the CNNC organizational budget, including the current AmeriCorps budget. Excluding the current budget, the proposed budget represents 68% of the CNNC organizational budget.

Diverse non-federal support is achieved through the projected 28 PAs providing cash match. Other resources include local foundations, United Ways, corporate contributions, member positions built into agency operations, & other agency fund raising mechanisms. CNNC & ACCESS also develop their own nonfederal support. ACCESS members are budgeted into foundation grant proposals. UNCG contributions underwriting CNNC & ACCESS operations have grown & continue to grow as ACCESS collaborates more closely with UNCG community economic development & service learning efforts. Decreased reliance on federal support is reached as ACCESS increases its match & increases PA cash match to help assure commitment. There is also broader collaboration with other CNNC projects & stakeholders within the UNCG system. ACCESS is creating broader community impact through the strategy of increasing PA capacity & sustainability. The ACCESS program derives \$546,321 in cash & in-kind match from non-CNCS sources. The in-kind amount is \$312,559 & is derived from: UNCG faculty, fringe & indirect cost; PAs (site supervisor salaries, fringe, & cost of space used by members); & program evaluation. The cash match that comes from PAs, which is paid out in member stipend & fringe totals \$233,762.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: The CNNC ACCESS Project recruits PAs each year dependent upon community needs & also the potential for growth of community based agencies that are immigrant focused. When possible, ACCESS will partner with & provide technical assistance to these agencies. These PAs are typically highly committed & culturally competent but lacking in management & sustainability practices. ACCESS will need to provide extra training & support to these PAs and sometimes coach them on how to raise their required cash match. However, the benefit to the community is important for quality services & long-term impact. NC has one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation, & the Greensboro area where the CNNC office is located was hard hit by economic decline associated with loss of the area's major manufacturing- textiles & furniture.

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Similarly, rural areas have been hard hit by losses sustained in the agricultural industry, particularly tobacco. Most immigrants/refugees traditionally found employment in these industries. Through leverage of other resources, ACCESS has been able to hold down federal budget expenses associated with program costs.

FOR CURRENT GRANTEEES ONLY: In this grant application, ACCESS proposes to increase the target area from the Piedmont (central area of the state) to recruitment of PAs across the state, including mountain and coastal areas that are more resource poor. In addition, ACCESS proposes to increase the local cash match from the current \$6,000 per MSY to \$6,500 per MSY.

b. BUDGET ADEQUACY: The proposed budget, an increase from the current year, will allow ACCESS to reinstate a part time administrative support person, assuring adequate documentation of program responsibilities. This added cost is absorbed primarily through increased cash match from PAs and increased member enrollment. ACCESS has learned through years of experience what a realistic budget is and has been able to leverage more university resources to cover some expenses. CNNC has also successfully integrated other programs into the program design to support ACCESS outreach. New programs and PAs can be integrated into ACCESS programs at minimal expense. The increased statewide target area will also allow ACCESS to solicit funds through statewide networks, serving resource poor communities.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

Evaluation report and plan are separate attachments.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

N/A

Continuation Changes

N/A