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## Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: MSUCorps will address the identified needs of extremely low levels of educational achievement, school graduation and postsecondary enrollment in 23 rural Kentucky Appalachian counties by placing 30 full time AmeriCorps/MSUCorps members in local schools to implement a comprehensive evidence-based and evidence-informed tutoring program in reading and mathematics. The counties served are Bath, Bourbon, Boyd, Bracken, Carter, Clark, Elliott, Fleming, Greenup, Harrison, Johnson, Lawrence, Lewis, Magoffin, Mason, Menifee, Montgomery, Morgan, Nicholas, Powell, Robertson, Rowan, and Wolfe. Beginning September 1, 2013 and ending August 31, 2014 these 30 AmeriCorps members will tutor 750 at-risk students increasing their academic skill level from below grade level to at or above grade level. Members will recruit 150 community volunteers to provide 100 hours in reading tutoring, provide career awareness programs and participate in extracurricular activities and two community service projects. The CNCS focus area of education will be addressed by this program. The CNCS investment of \$399,000 will be matched with cash and in-kind match of \$617,328.

## Rationale and Approach

### A. IDENTIFIED NEED

MSUCorps addresses the compelling problem of extremely low educational achievement of high-risk elementary, middle and high school students in reading and mathematics. The need for AmeriCorps services was identified by the school administrators and teachers, Family Resource and Youth Service Centers (FRYSCs) staff, and school site based councils as part of their Response to Intervention (RTI) in the 23 targeted counties (Bath, Bourbon, Boyd, Bracken, Carter, Clark, Elliott, Fleming, Greenup, Harrison, Johnson, Lawrence, Lewis, Magoffin, Mason, Menifee, Montgomery, Morgan, Nicholas, Powell, Robertson, Rowan, and Wolfe). RTI identifies students who are struggling in school and outlines student and school interventions. The populations to be served are those high-risk students in the greatest need for assistance with improving academic achievement. These 23 counties were selected because the Kentucky Department of Education reported in the Kentucky School Report Cards (October 2012) that 59% of the students in the 23 target counties scored below the proficient level in reading and 63% scored below proficient in mathematics, compared to state averages of 48% in reading and 40.7% in math. Eighty percent (80%) of the schools to be served are below the state average in reading and math achievement. (Disaggregated Transition Index Report, 2011) School dropout rates are consistently higher in the target area than in the nation or the state; the dropout rate

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in the 23 county target area is 22%. (Kentucky Department of Education Graduation Rate 2012) This dismal dropout data is supported by an audit by the Kentucky Auditor's Office that found dropout rates were underreported in all 176 Kentucky school districts by at least 30%. Schools need to implement a dropout prevention program that works closely with students to improve their academic performance and provide them with the rigorous coursework needed for postsecondary attainment. At-risk students do not have the tools to become self sufficient, productive members of their community without intervention. Only 82% of the students from the targeted schools graduate from high school compared to 87% in the state and 90% in the nation. (2012 Kids Count Data Book) Today 80% of all jobs require training beyond high school and 63% require a postsecondary degree. (2010 PDK/Gallup Poll) In Kentucky, only 42% of ACT tested graduates are college ready as reported by Kentucky Department of Education. (2012) Postsecondary enrollment for graduating high school seniors in the targeted counties averaged 50% compared to 55% for the state and 63% nationally. (Kentucky Department of Education, Report on the Transition to Adult Life, 2011) It was reported that 45.9% of the students in the target area entered college with developmental needs in one or more subjects. (Council on Postsecondary Education 2010, ACT: College Readiness in 2010) Bachelors' degree attainment is low in the target counties; only 16.4% of adults have completed a bachelors' degree or higher compared to 20.3% in Kentucky and 27.9% nationally. (US Census Report 2011) There are substantial gaps in college enrollment rates due to lack of preparation for college-level coursework in school.

The 23 Appalachian counties in this project are among the persistently poorest and neediest in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2011); 22.3% of the families in the target area live below the poverty guidelines, compared to 17.7% in Kentucky and 13.8% nationally. The average per capita personal income in the target area is \$17,442 compared to \$22,515 for Kentucky and \$27,334 for the United States. This population was chosen because they are the most at-risk students with multiple indicators for dropout proneness and low postsecondary attainment located in this impoverished area. Over thirty percent (31.5) of children in the target area live in poverty, compared to 28% in the state and 23% in the nation. (2011 US Census Bureau, 2012 Kids Count Data) According to the Kentucky Office of Employment and Training (October 2012), the average unemployment rate in the target area (10.1%) exceeded those of Kentucky (8.4%) and the U.S. (7.9%). These economic conditions could lead to dire consequences for youth. Children in poverty will likely experience problems in school and are more likely to drop out of school. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Service 2007) The schools in the 23 counties have a higher rate (64%) of children on free and reduced lunch rates than

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Kentucky's rate of 57%. (Kentucky's Dept. of Education, 2012) The economic consequences of leaving high school without a diploma are severe. According to National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data, on average, dropouts are more likely to be unemployed than high school graduates, and earn less money when they do secure work. High school dropouts are also more likely to receive public assistance than high school graduates who do not go on to college, a reality due at least in part to the fact that young women who drop out of school are more likely to have children at younger ages and be single parents than their counterparts who do graduate. Children living in communities with high poverty rates suffer from a lack of support services and opportunities that are available to children living in communities with lower poverty levels. (2012 Kids Count Data Book) Recent census data show that one-third of the dropouts are eight times more likely to go to jail and four times less likely to volunteer, vote or participate in community projects as college graduates. (Grad Nation Guidebook, 2010)

### B. AMERICORPS MEMBERS AS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SOLVE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS:

AmeriCorps members in MSUCorps are a highly effective means of addressing the need of low academic achievement due to the design of the program, the activities of the members, and a record of proven results. Each member tutors a minimum of 25 teacher-referred at-risk students who are below grade level in reading and/or math in one-on-one and/or small group (2-3 students) sessions. Each student receives a minimum of 3 sessions per week for a minimum of eight (80) days with each session averaging thirty minutes. Members provide additional services that include mentoring students during afterschool programs, providing help with homework, extracurricular activities, assisting to plan and implement 21st Century Programs, and advising school clubs. MSUCorps members plan and implement service projects with students including collecting food for local backpack programs for Make A Difference Day, Veteran's Day and Martin Luther King Jr. Day activities, and community service projects such as the annual MSUCorps sponsored Build-A-Bed Project. Once the service-learning project has been implemented, members provide students with a time for reflection to enhance personal growth from the activity. The schools have tried to provide a means of impacting the student's academic performance that is consistent over time, intensive, and intrusive. They attempted to use community and parent volunteers for tutoring, but the volunteers were inconsistent and the results were marginal. MSUCorps' research-based tutorial model places tutors in schools to address student needs over a long period of time (11 months) while supplementing the tutoring with mentoring and service learning opportunities. It is consistent and intense with

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proven results of increasing achievement rather than hit and miss, a deficiency often seen in the use of community volunteers. Without MSUCorps the students will not increase academic skill levels at the rate needed to be successful in school. The MSUCorps Program requests thirty (30) full time slots to address the need in our service region.

### C. EVIDENCE-BASED/EVIDENCE-INFORMED INTERVENTION WITH MEASUREABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT

At the end of the three year grant cycle, eighty-five (85) percent of the students (1913) receiving tutoring will increase academic skill level to at or above grade level from one or two years below grade level. Of the 25 students tutored annually by each member 21 students will be functioning at or above grade level. This measureable community impact is based on the use of both evidence-based and evidence-informed interventions. On the basis of proven community impact of the MSUCorps' research based tutorial model with similar at risk students, the performance target of eight-five (85) percent was determined. In the past three years, MSUCorps members have tutored over 3,000 students with eighty-five (85) percent of the students making academic progress as reported on the annual progress reports. The students will be identified by teachers, administrators, and Family Resource Youth Service Center (FRYSC) staff based on low reading/math scores from the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), a state approved assessment program. Additional criteria for student selection are low overall achievement, chronic absenteeism, dropout proneness, and economically disadvantaged. During the eighty day program, MSUCorps members will provide each student with a minimum of 3 tutoring sessions a week with each session averaging thirty minutes. In addition to tutoring, the MSUCorps members will plan and implement with students and 150 volunteers (5 per member) two service learning projects such as 9/11 Day of Service, Veteran's Day, Make A Difference Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, and AmeriCorps week. MSUCorps members will also recruit 150 community volunteers (5 per member) to provide tutoring in reading and/or math, provide civic awareness programs, and participate in school/community activities. School districts utilize the state approved, evidence-based assessment program Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) to measure student skill level and subsequently derive a goal for each student. Based on the assessment results, the teachers and administrators determine what type of intervention is used allowing the member to: differentiate instruction with built-in remediation to raise individual student achievement; provide rigorous and engaging content that is continually updated as state standards change; and, assign content to individual students based on their prescribed instructional level. Initial testing results determine candidates for intervention (below grade level), and tutoring is tailored by

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collaborating with teachers and school administrators to review MAP scores for the selected students. For reading and math, MAP scores report a student's skill level as one of the following: above, at, below, one year below, or two years below grade level. Reliability and validity of the MAP assessment has been documented by the Kentucky Department of Education. Members will tutor students who are one or two years below grade level. The MAP assessment is administered by the school three times annual (beginning of the year, mid-year, and end of the year). Members will ensure that progress made during tutoring sessions is charted and evaluated in individual student files by reporting the MAP assessment scores. The impact or change in academic skill level will be measured by students completing end of year MAP testing. At the end of the school year, the member will meet with the teacher and school administrator to review the MAP scores for the students by comparing beginning, mid, and final MAP assessment scores to determine the impact. This impact will be reported to MSUCorps Program Director who will compile an annual report of the number of students who are at or above grade level. For evidence-based evaluation purposes, the MSUCorps Program Director will compare scores in reading and mathematics before and after the tutoring intervention from the state assessment (MAP). Student scores will be obtained from the MAP programs as a baseline for student academic level, and a score from the MAP assessment will be obtained after the MSUCorps intervention has taken place. MSUCorps will report progress based on the academic gains made below, at or above grade level. It is expected that eighty-five percent (85%) of students (638 annually or 1913 in three years) will improved their proficiency level in reading or math as reported by the state test scores.

In addition to an evidence-based approach, MSUCorps uses an evidence-informed approach. MSUCorps members collect and maintain intake and exit forms on each student. These forms record the teacher's observations of student behaviors such as attendance, test taking skills, peer relations, time-on-task, participation, and study skills. The teachers record student behavior before the tutoring and at the end of the year after completing the tutoring program. This internal performance data is used to measure change in those behaviors and to continuously improve the intervention.

**MEASUREABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT:** Through the use of evidence-based and evidence-informed interventions, the community need will be impacted. At the end of each year, 638 students who were performing below grade level will be performing at or above grade level after participating in 80 days of intensive tutoring. The impact will be measureable and documented. In the past three years, MSUCorps members have tutored over 3000 students with 85% of the students meeting or exceeded the established performance measure targets reported on annual progress reports.

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### **D. AMERICORPS MEMBER RECRUITMENT:**

Member recruitment begins with educating the community through presentations on AmeriCorps and its benefits. The MSUCorps staff will work with site supervisors to recruit members from the local community. Many applicants are found through former members, teachers, or parents of service recipients. Information regarding the need for members is available on the MSUCorps website and shared with the PTA, local organizations, School-Based-Decision-Making Councils, and college career offices. Local newspaper ads, PSAs, flyers at community centers, personal contacts with community agencies, and the AmeriCorps on-line recruiting resources will be used. MSUCorps provides a unique opportunity for residents living in rural communities and low income individuals to become involved in addressing problems and effecting change in their own community while having the opportunity to further their education by utilizing the educational award. MSUCorps has a long success rate of providing a pathway to employment for members in rural America where job opportunities are scarce and unemployment rates are above the national average. During recruiting, information will be shared about the benefits of AmeriCorps: service to the community, ability to make a difference, living allowance, insurance coverage, education award, childcare benefits, etc. Every effort will be made to ensure that selected members have a vested interest in their communities, strive to promote the ideals of volunteerism, and have a need for the AmeriCorps Education Award. Program staff will actively seek a corps that is diverse, includes people 55+, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and members from the communities to be served. Individuals will be recruited from veteran organizations, RSVP programs, Multicultural Student Affairs Offices, faith based organizations and unemployment offices. MSUCorps goes beyond the requirements of a high school diploma/GED, and requires successful completion of the Kentucky para-educator's assessment if the applicant has less than 48 college hours. The para-educator's assessment determines the quality and knowledge of non-certified applicants who work directly with students as a tutor. Candidates must score 70% or above. Program staff and the site supervisor interview selected applicants. These interviews focus on the candidate's skills, willingness to serve and desire to make a difference, and the benefits of serving with MSUCorps.

### **MEMBER TRAINING:**

MSUCorps ensures the training prepares members to perform the tutoring and all other activities during the term of service. Member training begins with a two-week training program. MSUCorps staff ensures that members adopt the following skills and citizenship goals: fostering within themselves and among their Corps positive attitudes regarding the value of lifelong citizenship and service for the common good; orienting, discussing and exploring their community and the people,

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processes, and institutions that are most effective in improving local community conditions; enhancing their ability to plan projects that involve students and respond to real community needs; and developing the social, educational, employment, cultural, life, and analytical skills necessary to effectively participate in American democracy. Training topics will include: an introduction to AmeriCorps and national service; an overview of MSUCorps, KCCVS and CNCS administrative policies and prohibited activities; reporting procedures; math and reading tutoring interventions; assessing community needs and solving problems by organizing students and volunteers; CPR/first aid; conflict resolution; team building; valuing diversity; mentoring at-risk students; utilizing test data to target academic issues; recruitment and training of volunteers; understanding school culture; strategies for creating a college-going culture; National Service projects; and fostering civic engagement in communities. The members will acquire a number of skills during their service: they will be certified in CPR/first aid and emergency response training through the American Red Cross; certified tutors by their school district; and trained as facilitators in the Prichard Committee's parental empowerment model, "Parents & Teachers Working Together". In the first week of service, members receive a training manual and a training bag with books and online resources to advance their professional development throughout the year. Pre/post assessments will measure the member's knowledge of training content prior to and after training. Results of the pre/post assessments will be used to refine training delivery and topics for quarterly trainings and future years. MSUCorps members receive training provided by their school district in topics such as confidentiality, collaborating with community partners, tutoring and volunteer policies. As part of the site supervisors' Partnership Agreement, the school is responsible for training the member on the scientific, school based tutoring program they will use to implement the intervention. The training timeline includes the initial two-week training, quarterly online trainings and face-to-face meetings, access to web-based training material and resources, and a library of available reading materials. MSUCorps members have access to best-practice tutoring strategies through the America Learns Network. The MSUCorps Program collaborates with the Morehead State University Career Services to provide members with interviewing, resume writing and workplace professionalism skills. Each member will develop a minimum of 2 service learning projects that engage K-12 students and volunteers in services to the community in conjunction with National Service Days. All volunteers must adhere to the school's volunteer guidelines and receive written information on prohibited activities from members. Monthly reflection logs completed through the America Learns Network, quarterly reports and members' pre and post service surveys will measure participant development. The program staff will track all

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member hours devoted to these activities, as reported on member reports through the America Learns Network.

### E. MEMBER SUPERVISION:

Each MSUCorps member is assigned to a specific site supervisor in the school where they will serve. The Site Supervisor is selected by the Program Director in collaboration with school district board office. A minimum of a bachelor's degree and two years experience in supervision is required. The Site Supervisor will supervise MSUCorps members on a daily basis. The MSUCorps member and site supervisor will meet each morning to review schedules, MSUCorps activities and all daily activities, and to discuss students and issues. Site supervisors directly supervise time sheets, travel, training (school based), quarterly reports and student files of each member placed at their site. The MSUCorps members submit their service hours to be approved twice a month through the America Learns Network. The site supervisors review and approve the time followed by review and approval by MSUCorps program staff. The America Learns Network provides MSUCorps members, site supervisors, and program staff twenty-four hour access to member's time by logging into the network with a secure and private username and password. MSUCorps program staff will visit with site supervisors and members monthly for the first three months of the program, followed by every other month visits for the remainder of the year. MSUCorps program staff visit the placement site to ensure the needed support and guidance is received to ensure accuracy of documentation, compliance, and AmeriCorps branding. Members are required to submit timesheets twice a month in America Learns and their travel monthly. Each quarter, members will submit a report to program staff. Each report requires activity logs for tutoring, training, community service projects, volunteers, assessments of progress towards performance measures, and success stories. The program staff, site supervisor and member will complete and discuss the 60 day and end of the year evaluation. As part of the placement site selection, the program staff and site supervisor sign a Partnership Agreement to ensure that MSUCorps activities are not duplicative of existing services and the MSUCorps member is not displacing an employee, supplementing services, engaging in a prohibited activity, and abiding by FBI criminal background check protocol. The MSUCorps staff conducts an annual training and schedules quarterly meetings with site supervisors to ensure each supervisor is trained on responsibilities as an MSUCorps Site Supervisor and educated on prohibited activities. Through the Partnership Agreement, Site Supervisors certify that they understand their role as a site supervisor. The program staff will maintain regular contact with each member through site visits, phone calls, and emails to ensure that the program is being implemented as planned and prohibited activities are not occurring. To ensure

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member retention and program completion, each member will receive ongoing counseling by program staff and site supervisors concerning hours completed, activities remaining, and recognition of individual successes and impacts made in communities. At the end of the program year, members will complete a Member Survey to determine their satisfaction with their placement site, the program staff, and the overall AmeriCorps experience.

### **TUTORING PROGRAMS ONLY:**

MSUCorps goes above the requirements for tutoring programs by requiring a high school diploma/GED and successful completion of the Kentucky Para-educator's assessment if the applicant has less than 48 hours of college credit. This plan complies with AmeriCorps requirements for member tutoring qualifications in the regulations. All MSUCorps members will successfully complete an intensive research-based tutoring training through their school district in order to provide tutoring to students with the site-specific tool. Members will also be provided with tutoring information/skills utilized by various academic programs at MSU to train tutors. In-service tutor training is provided monthly online and quarterly in person. This plan complies with AmeriCorps regulations for member tutor training.

### **F. AMERICORPS MEMBER EXPERIENCE:**

MSUCorps uses strategies to ensure that members have powerful service experiences that increase community impact and lead to continued civic participation and connectivity with other AmeriCorps and national service participants. MSUCorps collaborates with AmeriCorps VISTA, local and national corps, and community partners to implement service projects. Team building and experiential learning activities are incorporated into ongoing training to promote member recognition, create esprit de corps, and connect members. First year members will be paired with 2nd year members to support and assist them. Members will participate in structured opportunities for reflection through the use of monthly reflection logs in the America Learns Network. Members will complete reporting and reflection logs to help them problem solve, reflect, and learn from their service experiences. Quarterly training programs will be member-centered; where second year members will assist with training and provide support for first year members. At each training members will report the results of their service projects, which will help them develop their own strategies to solve community problems and cultivate a lifelong ethic of personal, family, and community responsibility. A survey of members' training needs will be conducted early in the program year and results will be used to plan the training agenda for the year. Members will attend interagency meetings and trainings sponsored by school districts, community partners, MSU, and KCCVS. MSUCorps ensures that members are

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aware that they are AmeriCorps members during the selection process and continuing through the two week orientation, regular email updates and newsletters about AmeriCorps activities, and quarterly meetings. A Recommitment Ceremony also helps members re-identify half way through their service year that they are AmeriCorps members. Members will be recognized during AmeriCorps week and participate in statewide activities for members sponsored by KCCVS. Members will be recognized for accomplishments through the MSUCorps website, Facebook site and the newsletter. MSUCorps will provide incentives, such as additional AmeriCorps gear and/or public recognition during meetings and professional development seminars to encourage and retain members. An awards program will be held at the end of the program to recognize all members completing their term of service. MSUCorps hosts a picnic for former and current members to promote continuous collaboration and recognition among all MSUCorps members. In addition, MSUCorps alumni are invited to MSUCorps service activities such as the annual Build-A-Bed Project to promote continued civic involvement. At the 60-day evaluation members will assess if they are on target with the program goals, and if they are satisfied with their service experience. Members' satisfaction with training, supervision, and program design will be assessed with quarterly satisfaction surveys. The program staff will regularly visit each site and have frequent email and phone communication with members to provide individual support and advice to members and assess satisfaction. MSUCorps has a history of providing a pathway to employment for members. Based on member follow up interviews, the 2011-2012 employment data shows: eight alumni are currently in school using their educational award; seven alumni have teaching jobs; four alumni are employed full-time in another capacity; and six members have returned for their second year of service. Information was unavailable on four members.

### **G. VOLUNTEER GENERATION:**

MSUCorps members will recruit a minimum of 300 community volunteers to meet the needs of at-risk students, the school and community. Members will receive training during the orientation and during quarterly trainings regarding recruiting, training, managing and supporting volunteers; this will include making volunteers aware of prohibited or unallowable activities. MSUCorps maintains strong collaborative relationships with other Corporation for National and Community Service funded programs. MSUCorps and the MSU sponsored RSVP Program, the America Reads program, and VISTA members across the service region collaborate on community service projects. MSUCorps and other CNCS programs collaboratively recruit and train volunteers, conduct trainings, sponsor community service events and National Service Days. These collaborations provide volunteer

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opportunities for members to partner with volunteers from other community service programs and AmeriCorps members to maximize services to communities. To effectively use volunteers, MSUCorps staff and members will work with site supervisors to develop volunteer policies and procedures that will be incorporated into a Volunteer Manual for both episodic and ongoing volunteer needs at each site. The Volunteer Manual will include information about AmeriCorps prohibited activities. Members will recruit volunteers by speaking to community and civic organizations, PTAs, faith-based organizations, college and school student organizations and attending advisory meetings. A special effort will be made to recruit adults ages 55 and older and veterans at senior citizens centers, retiree groups, American Legion members, and Veteran of Foreign Wars members. MSUCorps members will work with MSU's Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Center for Regional Engagement, United Way, FRYSCs and other volunteer programs to connect volunteers to the needed services. MSUCorps members will recruit, train and manage volunteers to mentor at-risk students and assist with community service projects such as Make a Difference Day food drives and the annual MSUCorps sponsored Build-A-Bed Project. MSUCorps members will support the America Reads Initiative by recruiting and training community volunteers to be reading tutors for the MSU RSVP Program, America Reads Work Study Program, Adult Learning Centers and other volunteer programs. Volunteers will be asked to complete a Volunteer Survey to report their satisfaction with their volunteer experience. Volunteers will be supported by MSUCorps staff and members and will be recognized in the MSUCorps Community Heroes newsletter and at the annual MSUCorps awards program.

### **H. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION:**

All members receive AmeriCorps service gear and are identified as AmeriCorps members at all times to increase national and local identification and awareness of the program. Members are provided with an AmeriCorps lanyard and picture identification tag with the AmeriCorps logo to wear during service hours to foster identification with the AmeriCorps Brand. The budget provides \$80.00 per member for member gear including a tee-shirt and a sweatshirt. In addition, MSUCorps members are provided with posters and stickers to identify the service site as having an AmeriCorps member serving in the school. MSUCorps program staff ensure the service site and member have AmeriCorps identification during regular site visits. Members and site supervisors are provided with an electronic file containing the AmeriCorps logo that must be used on all public materials pertaining to AmeriCorps such as brochures, event posters, press releases, website, Facebook, member bags, etc.

### **Organizational Capability**

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### A. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING:

**BACKGROUND:** The mission of the MSUCorps Program is to increase the educational success of at risk students by providing tutoring in reading and/or math and other coordinated, direct services. Morehead State University (MSU) has a successful history of administering AmeriCorps grants from 1994-2006 and 2007-2012. In 2011-2012, MSU received \$15,192,579 in grant funding from a variety of entities as part of a total budget of \$135,700,000. Total current funding received from CNCS which includes MSUCorps, Retired Senior Volunteer Program and AmeriCorps VISTA is \$451,024. Less than 1% of MSU's revenue is from CNCS. MSUCorps is housed within the Center for Adult Education & College Access (AECA), which oversees several grant programs at the University. AECA is committed to assisting communities in achieving their educational goals and dedicated to providing meaningful volunteer service. AECA staff members, RSVP volunteers and MSUCorps members are actively involved in campus and community service events and assist with National Service Days. MSU departments, such as, Career Services and the Center for Regional Engagement collaborate with MSUCorps to maximize resources to provide training, volunteer services and support. This structure allows for effective collaboration with other programs to support MSUCorps. The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs is responsible for conducting administrative review for all grant and contract submissions. MSU has a comprehensive management structure in place to oversee the MSUCorps project which includes the MSU Board of Regents (appointed by the governor), President, Provost and the Assistant Vice President of AECA. All of these positions have specific roles and job descriptions. The MSUCorps Project Director reports to the Assistant Vice President of AECA. The MSUCorps Project Director is responsible for managing the program and fiscal oversight. The Assistant Vice President of AECA supervises the MSUCorps Project Director and reviews all expenditures. The federal accountant in the Office of Accounting and Fiscal Services must approve all expenditures and generate monthly/quarterly fiscal reports. All fiscal procedures comply with Morehead State University's fiscal policies for grants and contracts. In addition to MSU's organizational structure, an MSUCorps advisory council (consisting of the Project Director, site coordinators, members, Assistant Vice President of AECA, RSVP Director, VISTA members and community stakeholder representatives) meets twice a year to advise the program in developing resources, determining training needs for members, providing technical assistance and evaluating MSUCorps.

**STAFFING:** The MSUCorps staff consists of a full-time Project Director, a full-time program coordinator, site supervisors (in-kind), Assistant Vice President for Adult Education & College Access (in-kind), and Administrative Support Assistant (in-kind). The MSUCorps Project Director will have a

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minimum of a master's degree and two years experience in training, grants, and community service. The project director will administer MSUCorps, including management of fiscal and program operations, to ensure that the performance measures are accomplished; select service sites; monitor service sites and program for compliance; supervise the recruitment, selection, training and evaluation of staff and members; manage the programmatic and fiscal operations of the program to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations; coordinate communication, including the submission of reports, with the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service (KCCVS); administer the MSUCorps members' living allowance and benefits; and conduct annual evaluations of the program. Other responsibilities include collecting data for evaluations; serving as liaison between the program and Site Supervisors; mentoring and coaching members; and providing training and support for Site Supervisors. The current project director exceeds the minimum requirements for the position. Mary Claire Williams has a masters' degree in Social Work and over six years of experience working in grant programs. A full time Program Coordinator will help manage and supervise the 30 members. This person will assist with training, supervising, coaching, mentoring and evaluating members and site coordinators as part of the plan to retain members. The minimum qualifications are a bachelor's degree and two years experience in training, grants, and community service. The Site Supervisor will provide supervision of members' daily service (in-kind). The Assistant Vice President for Adult Education & College Access (in-kind), and Administrative Support Assistant (in-kind) will assist the Project Director with the fiscal and administrative areas of the program and evaluation including bookkeeping, reconciliation of budgets, and maintenance of project files. During the program year, the Advisory Council, Program Staff, Site Supervisors, Assistant Vice President for AECA and Administrative Support Assistant will review program activities and make suggestions for improvement. MSU conducts an ongoing internal assessment process using the WEAVE Online Program for continuous improvement and annual staff evaluations. MSUCorps has been successfully integrated into the Morehead State University Center for Adult Education and College Access since the program began in 1994. The program has consistently performed well by meeting or exceeding performance targets and compliance reviews.

### **B. SUSTAINABILITY:**

The focal point for the project's sustainability is the 30 school districts in the 23 counties. MSUCorps will work with the schools to design and implement a service delivery model to sustain the program after the AmeriCorps grant ends. The reliance on federal funds will decline over the three years with more funding coming from the schools. MSUCorps has a successful history of raising funds and

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resources to support the service activities. The program will continue to seek opportunities to increase community and local funds to support services for long-term sustainability. By recruiting additional volunteers for the schools and implementing volunteer service projects, MSUCorps is expanding/increasing the reach of the program in the community. MSUCorps has built grassroots involvement with the implementation of advisory councils and the recruitment of community volunteers, parents, peers, and college students. Through this involvement, support is generated to sustain tutoring services utilizing community volunteers and AmeriCorps Alumni beyond the grant period. The stakeholders were involved in the development of the MSUCorps program by identifying the needs of the low achieving students and designing a comprehensive intervention plan to address this community need. Because of the involvement of the key stakeholders, a strong foundation is in place to sustain the program.

### C. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

MSUCorps will begin the service year with a Site Supervisor training during which a handbook is provided and reviewed to discuss compliance with AmeriCorps rules, regulations, and prohibited activities. Site Supervisors sign a Partnership Agreement stating they understand the rules, regulations, responsibilities, and prohibited activities. MSUCorps members and Site Supervisors are provided with a handbook and trained on the topics; they sign a contract stating they understand and agree to comply. MSUCorps staff will make regular and unscheduled site visits to monitor compliance at sites and with members. Members, Site Supervisors and volunteers will be reminded of prohibited activities and program compliance in quarterly newsletters, meetings and trainings. Reports are monitored for compliance issues. If compliance issues or risk are detected, the MSUCorps Program Director will work with the site supervisor to create an action plan to correct the activities at the site. If site or member is determined to be at risk or out of compliance, MSUCorps staff will increase visits and communication until the issue is resolved.

DEMONSTRATED COMPLIANCE, ENROLLMENT, AND RETENTION: There were no demonstrated compliance issues during the 2011-2012 or 2012-2013 program year. ENROLLMENT: During the 2011-2012 program year, a full corps of members was recruited, with 2 members exiting without an award and 31 members retained for a full term to earn an educational award. During the 2012-2013 program year a full corps of members was recruited. To alleviate the problem of members' leaving the program without earning an education award, MSUCorps will recruit only members who have a need for the education award. This will be accomplished by involving the placement site supervisors in the selection process. A shared interest in candidates will be developed allowing quality

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members to be recruited. RETENTION: To improve member retention, MSUCorps has implemented several additional strategies. First-year members are paired with second year members to support them. A Recommitment Ceremony is held mid-year in the service term to help members reidentify and recommit. Members are recognized during AmeriCorps week and participate in state wide activities sponsored by KCCVS. Members are recognized for accomplishments through the MSUCorps website, Facebook site, and the newsletter. MSUCorps provides incentives such as additional AmeriCorps gear, public recognition during meetings and professional development seminars.

### Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

#### A. COST EFFECTIVENESS

Corporation Cost per Member Service Year (MSY) is the allowable cost per member at \$13,300 for 2013-14. MSUCorps has obtained and will continue to obtain diverse non-federal resources. The program already has cash and in-kind commitments from MSU and participating school districts totaling \$617,328. This funding from non-CNCS sources and the CNCS funding is sufficient to support the program. MSUCorps will secure other cash and in-kind contributions from community organizations and businesses to augment the program services to students. The MSUCorps staff will partner with community groups and businesses to develop programs to support MSUCorps. A great portion of the cost of MSUCorps is being absorbed by non-CNCS resources. The CNCS share of the costs is 39%. For 2013-14, MSUCorps decreased reliance upon CNCS funds by increasing the cash and in-kind match. The cash match is \$5,500 and the in-kind match is \$13,860 per member from the schools. In the next two years, schools will increase the cash and in-kind match. During 2013-14, the program will recruit community volunteers to expand the reach of program services without increasing federal costs.

#### B. BUDGET ADEQUACY:

The budget is adequate to support program activities and result in the stated outputs and outcomes. Expenses for personnel, fringe, staff and member travel, criminal history and FBI checks, supplies, and member support costs are included. In past years, only 85% of members obtained healthcare through the MSUCorps group plan. Should more members choose the healthcare option; the grantee side will assume the additional cost. Travel expenses are due to the rural and large service area. Staff travel is used for monthly site visits. All costs are reasonable and in-line with MSU fiscal policies. MSUCorps has worked with numerous campus and community stakeholders, civic organizations and AmeriCorps alumni to provide non-financial support. MSU has increased the space allotted to the program. The budget has substantial cash and in-kind support from community stakeholders. Total

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in-kind and cash match is \$617,328 or 61% of total budget. The total cost to Corporation is \$399,000 or 39% of total budget. The budgeted personnel cost of \$107,377 supports two staff plus an in-kind \$329,525 to implement the program. The staff is necessary to monitor 30 members at multiple sites and ensure performance measures are met and the program adheres to procedures as outlined by AmeriCorps and MSU. The program budgeted \$5,760 for staff travel to visit members at placement sites and attend KCCVS and National Service trainings. The program budgeted \$21,589 for member training, member supplies and gear and cover the cost associated with member travel to trainings and their travel to National Service projects. The budgeted amount of \$424,650 covers the cost for member living allowance, FICA, Worker's Compensation and healthcare.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: The 23 Appalachian counties in this project are among the persistently poorest and neediest in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2011); 22.3% of the families in the target area live below the poverty guidelines, compared to 17.7% in Kentucky and 13.8% nationally. The average per capita personal income in the target area is \$17,442 compared to \$22,515 for Kentucky and \$27,334 for the United States. Over thirty percent (31.5) of children in the target area live in poverty, compared to 28% in the state and 23% in the nation. (2011 US Census Bureau, 2012 Kids Count Data) According to the Kentucky Office of Employment and Training (October 2012), the average unemployment rate in the target area (10.1%) exceeded those of Kentucky (8.4%) and the U.S. (7.9%). These economic conditions could lead to dire consequences for youth. Children in poverty will likely experience problems in school and are more likely to drop out of school. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Service 2007) The schools in the 23 counties have a higher rate (64%) of children on free and reduced lunch rates than Kentucky's rate of 57%. (Kentucky's Dept. of Education, 2012)

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

EVALUATION SUMMARY/PLAN: SUMMARY - MSUCorps tutored 717 at-risk students for the 2011-2012 program year and exceeded performance objectives. MSUCorps members tutored students for a total of 28,680 tutoring sessions in reading and/or math. 623 (87%) students demonstrated a two level academic gain in math and reading proficiency at grade level as determined by the Great Leaps Reading and/or Math pre and post test. MSUCorps members mentored with a total of 670 students throughout the course of the year, with 91% (609) demonstrating an increase in academic performance. MSUCorps recruited 990 volunteers for the 2011-2012 program year for community service, student mentoring, and disaster relief services. 100% of the volunteers reported satisfaction as measured by a volunteer annual assessment. 100% of members implemented a minimum of one

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community service project during 2011-2012 program year as measured by member and volunteer activity logs and site coordinator annual assessment. 100% of members participated in monthly community service projects, increasing community support. 100% of members attended all training sessions and demonstrated an increased understanding of program goals, community needs, tutoring skills, civic awareness and volunteer recruitment as measured by pre/post training assessment, annual member satisfaction and site supervisor surveys. The annual program evaluation indicated that students, members, and site coordinators were satisfied with the MSUCorps program.

PLAN: MSUCorps has an extensive formative and summative evaluation plan that is evidence-based and evidence-informed. The plan measures progress toward accomplishment of performance measures. Evaluation results will shape the development of the program and allow the program to make changes as needed. The evaluation process consists of an internal and external evaluation. The internal evaluation methods will produce quantifiable data that can be compared to the established performance measures to determine progress made toward achieving the performance measure and ultimately to determine if the performance measure was achieved at the end of the program year. The data collected will be used to prepare monthly, quarterly and annual reports for the Assistant Vice President for AECA and KCCVS. Continuous evaluation of data will allow for adjustments in implementation to meet the program performance measures, and the needs of students and members. Numbers of students tutored, volunteers, and community service projects will be obtained from member reports and logs. Reading and math gains will be derived from MAPS scores. The impact on student engagement behaviors will be measured by a pre and post assessment completed by the teachers for each student. This information will be maintained in a project database and MSUCorps files.

The program will have an extensive qualitative evaluation process that involves all stakeholders. Evaluation instruments using Likert and open-ended responses will consist of questions regarding satisfaction with services and personnel, whether services met needs, and recommendations for improvements. These qualitative measures will provide information regarding the quality of services provided; member, student, site supervisor, and advisory council satisfaction with services; the effectiveness of service delivery processes; recommendations for program revisions; and whether services are beneficial to members, students and sites. All information will be compiled into a Summary Annual Report submitted to the MSUCorps Director, Assistant Vice President for Adult Education & College Access, and the Advisory Council. This information will allow the project director to make timely adjustments in the implementation and delivery of services to meet better the program

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objectives and participant needs. MSUCorps will conduct an independent external evaluation to provide recommendations for improvement. The external program evaluation will assess the extent to which MSUCorps is meeting the performance measures. The evaluator will assess whether the processes currently used by MSUCorps are effective and efficient, the outcomes are appropriate and whether MSUCorps is implementing the right activities to achieve the intended outcomes. The impact on students' academic progress and members' attitudes toward civic engagement and service will be assessed. As a program at the University, MSUCorps participates in a five-year strategic planning process and annually reports on progress toward meeting program goals and performance measures. MSUCorps completes the University's annual unit assessment (WEAVE) by collecting and reviewing annual assessment data and making recommendations for program improvements. An annual external audit is conducted to ensure that the University is in sound financial shape and is in compliance with standard fiscal policies. MSUCorps is part of this external audit.

### **Amendment Justification**

N/A

### **Clarification Summary**

N/A

### **Continuation Changes**

N/A