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Executive Summary

Westhab, Inc. has 30 years experience of pursuing our mission of Building Communities and Changing Lives through developing affordable housing and delivering critically needed social services in metropolitan New York. 20 half-time AmeriCorps Members (representing 10 member service years) will provide educational services to homeless and at-risk children living in shelters and distressed neighborhoods, and place economically disadvantaged households into permanent housing, and new jobs. At the end of the three year period, we anticipate that AmeriCorps members will improve the literacy rates of 540 homeless and/or low-income children, move 180 homeless and low-income households into new homes, and place 180 hard-to-serve adults into employment. The focus areas of this project are Education and Economic Opportunity. The total project amount of \$170,289 represents a CNCS investment of \$128,334 and an in-kind match of \$41,955.

Rationale and Approach

Westhab's Serve America AmeriCorps Program (Serve America) will address three urgent local community needs in the counties of Westchester and Bronx, New York: 1.) Placing homeless and economically disadvantaged individuals into quality, affordable housing (Westchester); 2.) Providing job training, placement, and retention services to hard-to-serve individuals (Westchester); and 3.) Improving the academic performance of homeless and economically disadvantaged children in after-school settings (Westchester and the Bronx). Westhab has worked for thirty years to address these specific needs in order to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable residents of the New York Metropolitan area. These needs -- affordable housing, employment and youth services for homeless and low-income individuals and families -- truly encompass our mission: Building Communities. Changing Lives.

1.) Placing homeless and economically disadvantaged individuals into quality, affordable housing -- Economic Opportunity (Westchester County)

In 2012, Westhab helped 280 homeless families move into permanent housing in Westchester County, with the vast majority of homeless families originating from the large cities of Yonkers and Mount Vernon. Westchester's homeless population is a product of the harsh disparities that exist in the County. According to the most recent Census data, the median family income for Westchester County is \$101,324. However, this number is elevated by municipalities like Chappaqua, where the median family income is \$216,700. In Yonkers the median family income is \$66,601 and in Mount Vernon it is \$61,477. For some of these neighborhoods, like Census Tract 11.01 in southwest Yonkers,

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where AmeriCorps members will serve, 29.1% of individuals live below the poverty line and the median family income is \$41,182. In Census Tract 30 in the south side of Mount Vernon, another AmeriCorps target area, 17.6% of individuals live below the poverty line and the median family income is \$40,438.

In 2012 the Westchester County Continuum of Care (a network of homeless service providers, including Westhab) conducted its annual Point-In-Time count, in which 1,741 homeless persons were counted in one night. This represents a 13% increase in homelessness compared to the 1,537 individuals counted in 2011, and a 30% increase from the 1,339 individuals counted in 2010.

Exacerbating the housing problem for homeless residents is Westchester County's exorbitant cost of living. HUD's 2012 Fair Market Rents for Westchester are: Efficiency: \$1,139; 1-Bedroom: \$1,359; 2-Bedroom: \$1,580.

These rents are clearly unaffordable to homeless and economically disadvantaged families. The National Low-Income Housing Coalition's (NLIHC) Out Of Reach 2012 Report identifies Westchester County as one of the ten most expensive metropolitan areas in the nation. The County has extremely low vacancy rates (below 4% for rentals) coupled with extremely high housing costs. In order to afford a Fair Market Rent two-bedroom apartment without paying more than 30% of their income on housing, a household must earn \$5,266 monthly or \$63,200 annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this translates to an hourly wage of \$30.38. Conversely, in order for a minimum wage worker (like many of the clients we serve) earning an hourly wage of \$7.25 to afford the Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment, he/she must work 4.2 full-time jobs (NLIHC). Finding quality affordable housing continues to be a crisis for many residents of Westchester due to increasing rates of homelessness coupled with the astronomical costs of affordable housing and the extremely limited supply of affordable housing units.

2.) Providing job training, placement, and retention services to hard-to-serve individuals (Westchester)

In 2012, Westhab placed 405 hard-to-serve individuals (formerly incarcerated, homeless, or long-term public assistance recipients) into meaningful employment, the vast majority of whom live in Yonkers and Mount Vernon. NYS Department of Labor reports an unemployment rate of 6.8% for Westchester County, but this figure masks the harsh disparities that exist. The bleak economic reality is that the unemployment rates for African-American and Hispanic Westchester residents are 14.3% and 11.8%, respectively. As an example, Census Tract 31 in Mount Vernon has an unemployment rate of 12% and 34% of the adult population is not involved in the labor force.

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The two fastest growing job sectors in New York State are the Professional & Business Services sector (+38,800) and the Educational & Health Services sector (+32,400) (Department of Labor). However, these jobs require an advanced degree, something that few of our clients possess. In Census Tract 11.01 in Yonkers, of 1,192 men surveyed above the age of 18, only 113 (9%) had a bachelor's degree (U.S. Census).

Reliance on public assistance is also a major barrier to employment and self-sufficiency in Westchester. According to the Department of Social Services, as of July 2012 there are 3,194 Temporary Assistance to Needy Families ("TANF") cases, 859 Safety Net Maintenance of Effort ("SN MOE") family cases, and 2,657 Safety Net Assistance ("SN") single adult cases in Westchester County for a total of 6,710. The Yonkers District Office, Mount Vernon District Office, and the Housing Unit (Homeless Cases) comprise 5,410 of these cases, while the balance of the County includes only 1,300.

3.) Improving the academic performance of homeless and economically disadvantaged children in after-school settings (Westchester and the Bronx).

In Westchester, 80% of students graduate high school in four years, however, Westchester County's 2006 student cohort (2010 graduation) highlights the educational achievement disparities that exist in the County: Yonkers: 68% graduation rate; Mount Vernon: 60% graduation rate; Scarsdale (an affluent town less than 6 miles away from Yonkers and Mount Vernon) consistently maintains a 99% graduation rate. Westhab's Elm Street Youth Center has served children living in poverty-stricken communities of southwest Yonkers since 2006. Three Yonkers Public Schools within walking distance of the center, School 9, School 23, and the Hostos School, provide free/reduced price-lunch to 78%, 85%, and 76% of their total student populations, respectively. At School 9, only 32% of sixth graders scored at or above Level 3 (meeting proficiency standards) in English Language Arts and mathematics. At School 23, only 27% of sixth graders achieved ELA scores of Level 3 or above, while only 31% had math scores at Level 3 or above. At Hostos, the corresponding figures for sixth grade ELA and math scores were 34% and 41%, respectively.

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, reading proficiently by the end of third grade is a benchmark that greatly determines a child's educational development because up until the end of third grade, most children are learning to read, while fourth grade marks the transition when children begin reading to learn. Three quarters of students in America who are poor readers in third grade will remain poor readers in high school. Students with relatively low literacy achievement tend to have more behavioral and social problems in subsequent grades and are far more likely to drop out of school.

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Unfortunately, this data illustrate the numerous challenges that influence academic achievement for economically disadvantaged students attending Westhab's Youth Centers. Many of these challenges stem from growing up in poverty, surrounded by social ills including crime and substance abuse. Exposure to these risk factors -- poverty, violence, drug use -- often results in adverse childhood experiences and creates barriers to learning among students at the targeted schools.

b. Members as highly effective means to solve community problems: Westhab requests twenty (20) one year half-time AmeriCorps members (members) to address two national performance measures - - Economic Opportunity and Education -- as determined by the Corporation for National & Community Service. Members will make both immediate and long-term contributions to Westhab and will substantially enhance our ability to serve a greater number of clients. Members will be placed in Westhab's Youth Services, Housing Services, and Employment Services programs, where they will provide the following measurable community impacts:

Employment Services Impact: Westhab placed 405 individuals into employment in 2012. In year 1 of Serve America, Members in Employment Services will assist 80 clients, 60 of whom will obtain new jobs. 60 additional jobs found for clients represent a 15% increase in the total number of people placed into employment in one year. This outcome greatly enhances our Employment Services Department.

Employment Services Member Responsibilities: Four (4) AmeriCorps members will be placed within Westhab's Employment Services Department (ES), headquartered in Mount Vernon, New York. The goal of Members placed into ES is to provide job training, placement, and retention services to hard-to-serve clients. Members will be fully integrated into the Employment Services department and will receive formal training and supervision from the Director of Employment Services and the Volunteer Coordinator, as well as informal support and guidance from ES staff members. Members will conduct Intake and Employment Assessments with each client; develop service plans with clients that include specific employment goals; provide assistance in resume writing, interview techniques, and job search; will develop relationships with local employers and match clients with employers; and will prepare and lead employment training sessions.

Housing Services Impact: In 2012, Westhab placed 280 homeless families into permanent housing. In year 1 of Serve America, AmeriCorps members will assist 80 additional clients, 60 of whom will be placed into new housing. 60 additional families placed into permanent housing represent a 21% increase in the total number of families placed into permanent housing last year, again, a substantial achievement created in Housing Services as a direct result of AmeriCorps member service.

Housing Services Member Responsibilities: Four (4) AmeriCorps members will be placed in Westhab's

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Housing Services department, headquartered in Yonkers, New York. Members will be responsible for counseling and securing affordable housing placements for homeless and economically disadvantaged clients. Members will be fully integrated into the Housing Services department and will receive formal training and supervision from the Director of Employment Services and the Volunteer Coordinator, as well as informal support and guidance from Housing Services staff members. Member responsibilities include: locating affordable housing for clients; assisting clients with applications and preparation for move to permanent housing; counseling clients in overcoming barriers to securing an apartment (rent, family, employment, etc.); helping clients remain in housing once housing is secured; recruiting landlords and brokers by marketing the Housing Services program; inspecting housing units to ensure adherence to all standards; and connecting clients to available community resources.

Youth Services Impact: Westhab serves over 2,000 homeless and low-income children each year; however, in 2012, only 100 children at two youth centers received literacy tutoring services due to funding cuts, 80 of whom demonstrated improved academic performance. In year 1 of Serve America, AmeriCorps members will assist 240 children, 180 of whom will demonstrate improved academic performance in literacy, as determined by pre- and post-test results. An additional 140 economically disadvantaged youth at four additional youth centers will be able to receive one-on-one and group tutoring support from caring, responsible role models. AmeriCorps members will more than double our ability to address the critical literacy needs of children at our centers, the vast majority of whom are reading below State proficiency standards.

Youth Services Member Responsibilities: 12 AmeriCorps members will be placed at six Westhab youth centers (2 at each center) -- the Coachman Family Center in White Plains; The Elm Street, Calcagno and Schlobohm Youth Centers in Yonkers; the Promoting Excellence and Achievement in Kids (PEAK) Center in Mount Vernon; the Hunts Point Recreation Center in the Bronx, and our school-based youth center located in the Our Lady of Grace School in the Bronx.

Members placed in Youth Services will provide individual and group literacy tutoring support to children in grades 2-6 enrolled in Westhab's Literacy Improvement Project (LIP). Westhab has operated LIP since 2003, in partnership with New York State certified teachers from the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) of Southern Westchester. Members, guided by BOCES instructors, will work to improve reading levels of participants by addressing word pronunciation; reading comprehension; fluency; accuracy; intonation; and problem-solving in text; assist children in locating familiar and unfamiliar words in text; building vocabulary during read-aloud time; and will also support children during silent reading time. When members are not leading LIP activities they

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will facilitate structured enrichment and recreational activities for children such as: arts workshops, team sports activities, cooking classes, experiential field trips, and outdoor activities.

c. Evidence-based: Westhab's mission is Building Communities. Changing Lives. We provide essential services that enable homeless and economically disadvantaged individuals and families to overcome generational poverty and improve their quality of life through the provision of quality, affordable housing; employment training and placement; and educational support for children. AmeriCorps members will work in programs that utilize evidence-based and evidence-informed practices in order to accomplish their respective goals.

Housing Services: Evidence-Based & Informed: AmeriCorps members will be trained in and will implement the evidence-based Housing First model for homeless families; a modality that recognizes that before someone can break the cycle of homelessness, a safe and secure home is necessary, with support services readily available. Housing First is a national priority of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and is currently implemented in several cities throughout the United States. When a homeless family becomes homeless in Westchester today, they are placed in Westhab's family homeless shelter -- the only remaining Tier II Shelter in the County -- assessed by a staff social worker, and if there are no presenting emergency safety issues, the family is moved to a transitional apartment where they receive intensive services including assistance in aggressively searching for affordable housing. Over the past 2 years, as a result of Housing First, average shelter stays for clients at Westhab shelters have been reduced from over one year to under two months.

3-Year Program Goals in Housing Services: AmeriCorps members will complete the following Economic Opportunity Performance Outcomes during the three year AmeriCorps program:

- * Assist 240 homeless families locating appropriate housing
- * Place 180 homeless families into permanent housing

Westhab transitions over 200 homeless families into permanent housing each year through our Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) and our Apartment Finding Initiative; has built and/or renovated over 2,000 housing units; and has 300+ units in active development. We currently own and/or manage over 1,100 housing units. Member outcomes were determined by the Vice President of Housing Services and are based on the average number of clients served each month, and the percent of clients who are actually placed into permanent housing. Housing placement outcomes will be measured using proof of residency documents provided by clients or landlords. Members will track activities and services provided to clients in weekly Activity Logs, which will be reported to the Director of Employment Services and the Volunteer Coordinator on a weekly basis.

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Youth Services: Evidence-Based & Informed: The goal of our youth services department is to build on young people's strengths and help each young person grow into a mature and successful adult. To this end, our programs emphasize promoting positive relationships with peers; emphasizing youths' strengths; providing opportunities to learn healthy behaviors; connecting youth with caring adults; empowering youth to assume leadership roles in programs; and challenging youth in ways that build their competence. The National Dropout Prevention Center has synthesized information from a variety of reports on best practices for after school programs in "Essential Elements of Quality After-School Programs" (2006). These include providing activities that are either related to the in-school curriculum, or that teach skills not learned in school, such as life-skills or hobbies (Fashola, 1998). It is also believed that a balance must be reached between school-related learning, hands-on learning including community service, and non-academic activities such as sports and skills-training (Noam, Biancarosa, and Dechausay, 2003). AmeriCorps members will incorporate these elements by integrating project-based, experiential learning activities with the topics covered during the school day through our Literacy Improvement Project (LIP) as well as a variety of non-academic enrichment and athletic activities.

AmeriCorps Members will utilize several evidence-based tools in LIP. The Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) is a nationally recognized standardized assessment for recognizing which students are substantially deficient in reading and in need of additional support. The DRA is currently used by the Connecticut State Department of Education to assess reading levels of elementary and middle school students (Connecticut State Dept. of Ed., 2010). Members will work with trained teachers to assess reading levels of children enrolled in LIP using the DRA pre- and post-tests. Members will deliver weekly tutoring support to children using Afterschool KidzLit, a nationally recognized reading program created by the Developmental Studies Center that is aligned with New York State Common Core Learning Standards. KidzLit employs the power of reading aloud with children and encourages children to express themselves through visual arts, acting, and group discussions. Used in dozens of elementary and middle schools around the nation, researchers have found the program highly effective in improving student literacy.

3-Year Program Goals in Youth Services: AmeriCorps members will produce the following Education Performance Outcomes over the three year AmeriCorps program:

- * Deliver fifty four (54) rounds of LIP (3 rounds/year @ 6 youth centers) to 720 students in grades 2-6.
- * Of the 720 students enrolled in LIP, 540 (75%) will improve their DRA reading levels by 2 points, as

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evidenced by pre- and post-test scores.

Westhab has operated LIP since 2003 in partnership with NYS-licensed teachers from Southern Westchester BOCES. On average, 85% of LIP participants who complete the program show improvement in reading levels. Member outcomes were determined by Westhab's Vice President of Youth & Family Services and BOCES Literacy instructors based on program enrollment rates at each youth center and student turn-over. Two (2) AmeriCorps members will be placed at six (6) youth centers, and each center will enroll forty (40) children in their respective LIP programs each year, thus enabling Westhab to serve 240 total children each year (720 over three years). Each Youth Center will deliver three (3) 12-week programs of LIP each year -- a spring session, a summer session, and a fall session. Youth Services outcomes will be measured using the evidence-based Developmental Reading Assessment pre-and post-tests. Members will track activities and services provided in weekly Activity Logs, which will be reported to the Director of Employment Services and the Volunteer Coordinator on a bi-weekly basis.

Employment Services: Evidence-Based & Informed: Researchers have found that successful employment placement programs provide creative front-end intake procedures that serve to engage and bind participants to the program; strong case management that provides individualized attention to participants; and job development services that create strong relationships with employers (Black-Haennicke, Konieczny & Raphael, 2000). Studies conducted by the Mathematica Policy Research Institute also found that public assistance recipients seeking employment need more up-front services to build self-esteem, address fears, and overcome barriers such as a lack of childcare. Westhab's Employment Services Department operates on these core evidence-based practices. Our continuum of care provides a comprehensive intake process that enables our staff to identify and address barriers clients may face; employment specialists that provide intensive, on-going case management support to clients, including after employment has been secured; and job developers who maintain successful, long-term relationships with over 100 area employers.

Employers come to Westhab when they have job openings because they understand that our clients receive outstanding training and our staff is available to address any issues that may arise between the employer and client. We rely on internal evidence-informed research to determine future goals and to address issues. In 2010, we placed 358 homeless individuals and long-term public assistance recipients into jobs at an average wage of \$9.37 per hour. This number rose to 373 in 2011, and 405 individuals placed in 2012. Our monthly employment placement outcome reports track the progress

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of each client.

3-Year Program Goals in Employment Services: AmeriCorps members will achieve the following Economic Opportunity Performance Measures over the three year AmeriCorps program:

- * Assist 240 economically disadvantaged individuals with employment readiness, placement and retention services

- * Place 180 economically disadvantaged individuals into jobs

Since 1996, Westhab has placed over 3,000 hard-to-serve individuals into employment. Over the past three years we have placed over 1,130 individuals into employment at an average annual rate of 379 placements / year. Member outcomes were determined by the Vice President of Adult & Employment Services and are based on the average number of clients served each month, and the percent of clients who are actually placed into employment. Based on these figures, we anticipate that AmeriCorps members will place an additional 60 clients into employment. Employment placement outcomes will be measured using follow-up reports from employers and client paystubs. Members will track activities and services provided in weekly Activity Logs, which will be reported to the Director of Employment Services and the Volunteer Coordinator on a weekly basis.

d. Member Recruitment: Westhab will recruit AmeriCorps members through the following outlets: Westhab website; Craig's List; Idealist.org; Monster.com; Yahoo Jobs; Local colleges, including: Manhattanville, SUNY Purchase, Pace University, Mercy College, and Manhattan College.

Westhab's Volunteer Coordinator (who will oversee the Serve America AmeriCorps Program) will oversee the screening, interviewing and hiring process of potential members. Westhab takes great pride in hiring members of the local community, many of whom were formerly homeless or living in poverty. Hiring members from underrepresented populations falls directly within our mission-Building Communities. Changing Lives. -- and is a priority for the agency.

e. Member training is an essential aspect of the Serve America program to ensure that members obtain the skills and competencies needed to excel in their year of service. Trainings are divided into three sections: Initial Orientation; Monthly Group Training; and Department Training.

1. Initial Orientation (IO): IO is a 3-day training attended by all members. IO will take place on the first week of member service in December.

Initial Orientation Activity

Day 1 Welcome to Westhab: members familiarize themselves with the history, mission, and services provided by Westhab. Westhab's Volunteer Coordinator will lead several ice breaker and team-building activities with members.

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Day 2 Welcome to AmeriCorps: members will review AmeriCorps rules and regulations (including prohibited activities) with Westhab's Human Resources Manager, receive AmeriCorps clothing, and take van tours of Westhab sites and facilities where members will be serving.

Day 3 Welcome to your Site: members will report to assigned sites where they will be introduced to their Site Supervisors and site staff members. Site Supervisors will provide in-depth initial training to members regarding specific site responsibilities, monthly agenda, and schedule for the year.

2. Monthly Group Training: Westhab's Volunteer Coordinator (VC) is responsible for overseeing Westhab's Serve America program. The VC will lead monthly group trainings with all AmeriCorps members. Monthly trainings are based on curriculum provided by EnCorps, AmeriCorps' resource center for member development, and are tailored to improve member effectiveness, organizational quality, and help members develop new skills. Training topics include:

January: Active Citizenship -- creating a culture of civic engagement; February: Conflict Resolution - - helping members understand how to approach conflict and build successful relationship; March: Working as a team -- how to develop teamwork skills while getting the job done; April: Embracing Diversity -- training to help members be more culturally sensitive; May: Strengths-based counseling -- turn the negative to a positive; June: Handling Difficult Situations -- using real-life scenarios to discuss problematic member behaviors and situations; July: Review of AmeriCorps Protocol -- Members will review Prohibited Member Activities, rules, and regulations; August: Member Wellness - - Relaxation and reflection exercises to foster personal growth; September: Maintaining Boundaries in Social Services (day-long training in NYC); October: Project Management -- Developing skills to facilitate and plan projects; November: Recruiting and Managing Volunteers -- Working successfully with community volunteers; December: Preparing a portfolio / life after AmeriCorps

3. Department Training: Department Trainings are delivered by Supervisors responsible for providing direct, day-to-day supervision to AmeriCorps members. Employment Services Trainings will be led by the Director of Employment Services, or their direct report; Housing Services Trainings will be led by Westhab's Housing Coordinator; and Youth Services Trainings will be led by the Director of Youth Services, Youth Center Site Coordinators, and BOCES Literacy Instructors.

The following department trainings will be delivered during the year of service:

Employment Services Trainings: Introduction to Employment Services; Conducting Effective Client Intake; Resume Writing; Public Speaking; How Handle Difficult Clients; Leading Effective Job Readiness Trainings; Cultivating New Employers; "Sealing The Deal" -- How To Match A Client and

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Employer; Discovering Client Strengths; Linking Clients To Services -- Knowing Your Resources
Youth Services Trainings: Introduction to Youth Services; Understanding The Developmental
Reading Assessment; Becoming An Effective Literacy Tutor; Group Tutoring; One-on-One Tutoring;
Preparing a Group for Learning; Creating Appropriate Lesson Plans; How To Identify Child Abuse;
How To Command The Classroom; Understanding KidzLit leveled reading.

Housing Services: Introduction to Housing Services; Understanding Homelessness; Cultural
Competency; Housing First; Navigating The Housing Market; Building Effective Relationship With
Landlords; Linking Clients To Services -- Knowing Your Resources; Proper Reporting Requirements;
Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) training

f. Member Supervision: Westhab's Volunteer Coordinator (VC) will meet with Employment, Housing,
and Youth Services AmeriCorps members to conduct group supervision in their respective groups on a
bi-weekly basis. Service group supervision will take place at a designated site and will allow members,
as a group, to discuss issues, problems, or ask any questions they may have pertaining to their
particular placement site. Members will also participate in staff meetings at their designated site.
Staff meetings will occur on a weekly basis and will allow members to receive group supervision from
their Site Supervisors and build relationships with staff members who they work with every day. The
aforementioned Monthly and Department Trainings also function as opportunities for members to
receive supervision from the VC, Directors, and Site Supervisors. The VC is also available for
individual supervision, should a member request a meeting or require additional support. Westhab's
Volunteer Coordinator is an AmeriCorps VISTA alumnus and has three years of volunteer
management experience. He has been trained in effective Volunteer Management practices by the
United Way of Westchester and is very familiar with AmeriCorps policies. The VC will host quarterly
meetings with all staff responsible for supervising AmeriCorps members to review AmeriCorps
regulations and year-to-date progress. All AmeriCorps Supervisors report directly to the VP of Youth
& Family Services and the VP of Adult & Employment Services. AmeriCorps Supervisors must attend
Westhab's 9-week Summer Management Institute (SMI). Led by Westhab's Executive Team, SMI
provides comprehensive leadership training and equips Supervisors with the skills needed to effectively
manage staff and AmeriCorps members.

Tutoring Program: AmeriCorps members placed in Youth Services will serve as literacy tutors in the
Literacy Improvement Project (LIP), a tutoring program for homeless and low-income children that
Westhab has operated in partnership with the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) of
Southern Westchester since 2003. AmeriCorps members and other volunteer tutors are required to

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have a high school diploma and must successfully complete evidence-based pre- and in-service tutor trainings led by BOCES instructors. BOCES provides licensed New York State teachers to implement LIP through the BOCES Homeless Student Program. Jeanne Kennedy, a BOCES instructor who will serve as a lead LIP teacher, has served economically disadvantaged children in Mount Vernon public schools since 1970. She is certified as a classroom teacher and is also certified in reading recovery. Diane Keller, a BOCES instructor and lead LIP teacher, is certified in reading recovery and special education and has served economically disadvantaged children in Mount Vernon public schools since 1991. Teachers will bring their wealth of classroom and reading recovery experience in working with economically disadvantaged students to pre- and in-service trainings, as outlined earlier under Department Trainings.

g. Member Experience: Serve America provides year-round opportunities for AmeriCorps members to reflect on and learn from their service experience through our AmeriCorps Civic Engagement Program (CEP). CEP enables members to spend time working on service-learning projects separate from their daily duties. CEP projects will provide members time to have meaningful service experiences that produce community impact and that lead to continued civic participation and connectivity with other AmeriCorps and national service members. Each month, a different CEP project is scheduled, which members are responsible for planning and implementing among themselves and with other local, AmeriCorps and national service providers. CEP project lengths will vary, depending on the events planned by members. The following is a monthly schedule of CEP and scheduled service-learning activities:

January -- MLK Jr. Day of Service; February -- Yonkers Community Clean-Up with local residents and partner providers; March -- AmeriCorps Week in partnership with local service organizations; April -- New York Cares Day of Service (New York Cares is the primary volunteer service program sponsored by the City of New York and provides hundreds of service-learning projects throughout the city every month); May -- Mount Vernon Community Clean-Up with local residents and partner providers; June -- New York Care Day of Service; July -- Volunteer Day at Westhab's Food Pantries; August -- Field Trip with Youth Center participants to Bear Mount State Park, New York; September - - 9/11 Day of Service & Remembrance; October - National Learn & Serve Challenge in partnership with CNCS and the National Service Learning Partnership; November -- Service Learning Day of Reflection; December -- Day of Service/Networking event with AmeriCorps alumni in NYC. Activities such as AmeriCorps week, the National Learn & Serve Challenge, and the Day of Service/networking opportunity with AmeriCorps alumni enable members to foster a strong

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connection with AmeriCorps, other members and national service participants. Members will be provided polo shirts with the AmeriCorps logo, which they will be required to wear while working, thus ensuring that members, community members, partners, and the general public are aware of their affiliation with AmeriCorps. All members will participate in the aforementioned CEP activities together, which will ensure that members can work and grow together while strengthening their understanding of and desire to make civic participation a life-long hobby.

h. Volunteer Generation: In addition to their regular duties, all AmeriCorps members will participate in Operation: Volunteer; a project that enables members to expand Westhab's volunteering network while recruiting additional community volunteers to support members in the Service area (Employment, Housing, Youth). At the beginning of each program year, AmeriCorps members will be divided into three groups, with each group assigned one of the following projects: volunteer recruitment, volunteer retention, and volunteer management. Groups will meet once a month during Monthly Group Trainings to brainstorm, delineate responsibilities, and implement assigned projects. Groups will be responsible for executing their own monthly goals with the overarching goal of creating a stronger, more effective volunteering experience for volunteers at Westhab. Groups will meet with Westhab's Volunteer Coordinator during their monthly meetings to discuss challenges, successes, and to receive guidance as they build capacity within the organization. Groups are encouraged to partner with other volunteering agencies in Westchester, such as the Volunteer Center of United Way, in order to build capacity and strengthen their efforts. Members will be responsible for recruiting, retaining, and managing volunteers working in their assigned placement site. For example, if there is a need for three additional volunteer tutors at the Elm Street Youth Center, the Recruitment team will search for potential qualified candidates. The Retention team will create a program that tracks volunteer length of stay, record demographics, and research/implement successful retention strategies. The Management team will ensure that community volunteers have a positive experience.

i. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification: Westhab is firmly committed to identifying with the AmeriCorps brand. We will obtain all necessary AmeriCorps logos and branding materials from the Corporation of National & Community Service (CNCS) which will be included on the Westhab website, service gear and public materials including stationary, application forms, recruitment brochures, on-line position postings, and will be included in all other recruitment strategies, orientation materials, member curriculum, signs, banners, press releases and publications related to Westhab's AmeriCorps program. We will inform all other media outlets or partners who may post

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information about the program to include the appropriate branding material.

Organizational Capability

Background & Staffing: Westhab's mission is: Building Communities. Changing Lives. We provide safe, affordable housing and supportive services to help people improve their quality of life and to create secure communities in under-served neighborhoods. Over the last 30 years we have moved over 5,000 homeless household to permanent housing, built or renovated over 2,000 housing units, placed over 3,000 clients in employment, and delivered services to over 10,000 at-risk young people. We are currently the largest provider of housing and services to the homeless and low income in Westchester County, and we own and/or manage over 1,100 units of housing and deliver a comprehensive range of services to help families and singles succeed in permanent housing and achieve self-sufficiency.

Westhab is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization governed by a voluntary Board of Directors, with operations managed by a President/CEO appointed by the Board. The President supervises five Vice Presidents who oversee all agency operations and are accountable for adherence to the highest professional and ethic standards. AmeriCorps members will be supervised by the Volunteer Coordinator (VC); the Director of Employment Services; and the Director of Youth Services. Members will also receive daily supervision and support from Westhab staff at their placement site. The VC will oversee all aspects of the AmeriCorps program and will communicate with Directors and Site Supervisors to ensure that members are meeting project outcomes. Ultimately the President and Vice Presidents will monitor the program to ensure that the program is functioning properly and effectively, sharing updates with the Board of Directors and eliciting direction and feedback as needed. Westhab operated a successful AmeriCorps VISTA program from 2007-2010 which included a total of 7 full-time members who completed Capacity Building projects to enhance our organization. The members worked in community development, grant writing, and public relations. Each member completed a range of functions related to their Project Plan and made valuable and sustainable contributions to Westhab. For example, in the Community Development area, our VISTA Volunteers designed community surveys that continue to drive the nature of services we provide. In Public Relations, our VISTA Volunteers began the process of Westhab using social media to spread our message, which continues to be an important source of cultivating new supporters. Westhab has extensive experience administering and evaluating many previous complex, large-scale federal, state, and local grant programs. Westhab administers a \$20 million annual budget including over \$10 million from Westchester County to provide housing and supportive services for the

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homeless, as well as funds from the NYS Department of Labor, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and many other sources. Each government contract we operate undergoes rigorous programmatic and financial audits conducted by external evaluators. Westhab will partner with an external evaluator -- Social Policy Innovations (<http://socialpolicyinnovations.com/>) -- who will track outcomes and progress of AmeriCorps members in Serve America. The funding from CNCS represented less than 1% of our organizational budget. The proposed AmeriCorps project also represents less than 1% of our organizational budget.

As a new AmeriCorps applicant, all member positions are currently vacant and will be filled in a timely manner if awarded the contract. Potential candidates must display a strong commitment to serving clients from disadvantaged/vulnerable populations, including the homeless and low-income, substance abuse clients, the formerly incarcerated, public assistance recipients, and at-risk youth. Candidates will bring relevant skills that will allow them to effectively execute their responsibilities and will greatly enhance Westhab's ability to provide greater services to our client populations.

Youth Services -- Members placed in Westhab's tutoring program must have a high school diploma and will receive evidence-based initial and on-going training provided by BOCES Literacy Instructors, as per the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations. Previous experience working with children and/or young adults/low-income populations is preferred. Members must enjoy the challenges involved with working with youth who may present a number of academic and social deficits. Members with upbeat, engaging personalities are desirable.

Housing/Employment Services - For those applying for positions in Housing Services and Employment Services, we desire members who have experience in providing housing or employment services to hard-to-serve populations, but will train the right candidate if the willingness to learn and motivation to serve is strong enough.

Westhab provides robust training opportunities for AmeriCorps members through our 3-day Initial Orientation, Monthly Group Trainings, and Department Trainings. Initial Orientation is delivered by Westhab's HR Department and the Volunteer Coordinator (VC), who oversees Westhab's AmeriCorps program -- Serve America -- and who has substantial experience training and supervising volunteers.

The VC will also provide Monthly Group Trainings to members. Members will receive specific task-oriented training from their Directors and Site Supervisors during Department Trainings. The VC meet with Directors and Site Supervisors on a quarterly basis to review prohibited and acceptable activities for members in order to ensure program compliance. The VC will also conduct site visits to monitor member progress and compliance with Federal Regulations. Each Westhab staff member

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responsible for supervising AmeriCorps members is required to attend Westhab's annual Summer Management Institute, our internal training program led by our Executive Team, that prepares managers and directors to lead staff and volunteers effectively.

b. Sustainability: With an operating budget of \$20 million, Westhab receives funding from a variety of sources, including: federal, state, and local entities; private foundations; corporations; individual donors; and from three annual fundraising events. We continuously seek to maximize relationships with current stakeholders and cultivate new relationships with potential resources in order to ensure that the work created by AmeriCorps members is sustained after the AmeriCorps program has ended. Members will have a direct role in creating a sustainable volunteer program through Operation: Volunteer (OV). OV places AmeriCorps members in charge of creating a sustainable volunteering program that addresses volunteer recruitment, retention, and management within their specific service areas. During the course of the three year-period, members will grow and refine our volunteer database, our ability to retain volunteers long-term, and maximize the volunteer experience at Westhab by creating effective volunteer management techniques and training our staff members and other volunteers. At the conclusion of the three year AmeriCorps grant, Operation: Volunteer will continue to be delivered by volunteers who have been recruited and/or trained by AmeriCorps members. Volunteers operating the program will report to Westhab's Volunteer Coordinator who will work with volunteers to sustain Operation: Volunteer.

Westhab, Inc. provides an opportunity for clients utilizing our housing services to participate in policy making and decision making through Westhab's Participant Advisory Board. The Participant Advisory Board convenes quarterly with invited representatives from each of our housing programs to discuss policies, decisions, and the functioning of the housing program. Minutes will be taken from each meeting and these minutes are made available to other residents as requested. We also convene monthly Town Hall meetings at our Family Shelter and Singles Shelter, which allow residents an open forum to express views and provide feedback.

Our Employment Services Department hosts a similar meeting, the Employment Advisory Board, which is attended by members of our 100-company employer network. Employers provide guidance to Westhab regarding employment placement policies, and advise Westhab on current trends in the field of employment.

Each Westhab youth center conducts monthly Parent Meetings that are attended by local organizations, school members, and parents. Members of the community are able to ask questions to staff members, discuss current policies, and recommend any changes they may feel will benefit our

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programs. Recommendations from these meetings are presented to Westhab's President/CEO and Board of Directors as needed. Westhab staff will report back on follow-up items and the outcome of recommendations made by participants at each subsequent meeting.

c. Compliance: Westhab was awarded a three-year AmeriCorps VISTA grant from 2007-2010 which required strict reporting and stringent regulations and compliance. Westhab operated the VISTA grant successfully and is aware of the importance of monitoring AmeriCorps members, Placement Supervisors, and staff members to ensure that members are executing appropriate activities and that they are not conducting prohibited activities. Westhab receives over \$10 million in government contracts each year, each of which are given with strict reporting and compliance requirements. Our staff is held highly accountable for their actions and we place great priority in ensuring that all grants we receive are executed with the highest professional and ethical standards. In the unlikely event that an issue of compliance or accountability arises, the Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for documenting and reporting the event immediately to his supervisor, the Vice President of Youth & Family Services, and to the Corporation of National and Community Service and/or the NYS Office of Children & Family Services.

Westhab's Volunteer Coordinator (VC) will inform the Employment Services Director, Youth Services Director, all AmeriCorps members, and any potential partners about all prohibited activities, as per the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations section 2520.65, prior to the start of the program and on a quarterly basis as the program evolves. The VC will train Directors and pertinent Westhab staff on the nature of prohibited activities, how to detect them, and what to do should one find prohibited activities occurring. Further, AmeriCorps members will review prohibited activities at Initial Orientation and in Monthly Group Trainings.

Programmatic/Fiscal Capability: Westhab's ability to administer all financial and programmatic aspects of this initiative is demonstrated by our successful implementation of many previous complex, large-scale grant programs. Westhab administers a \$20 million annual budget including over \$10 million from Westchester County to provide housing and supportive services for the homeless, as well as funds from the NYS Department of Labor, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and many other sources. Westhab maintains high standards regarding fiscal procedures, controls and grant management practices. Our budgeting and fiscal oversight procedures include: (1) Preparation of an annual budget segregated by funding source; (2) Preparation of quarterly budget vs. actual financial statements for each grant for management and Board review; (3) Preparation of fiscal reports for submission to grantors at least quarterly, or more often if required by the grantor; (4)

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Maintenance of all books and records in accordance with GAAP, OMB regulations, and grantor requirements, including the segregation of each separate funding stream and related expenditures; and (5) Reconciliation of all grant vouchers to the general ledger on a quarterly basis.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

a. Cost Effectiveness: Our proposal includes \$128,334 of CNCS funds and \$41,955 of non-CNCS funds. This represents a 25% non-CNCS in-kind contribution through our contract with Westchester County Department of Social Services, which covers the cost of Westhab's Volunteer Coordinator, the Youth Services Director, and the Employment Services Director. Match also includes a grant provided by the NYC Dept. of Youth & Community Development, which pays for the Afterschool KidzLit tutoring program.

Our cost per MSY is \$12,833 which is below the maximum allowable cost. Our budget reflects an extremely prudent and financially responsible approach to providing critical social services at a greatly reduced rate (average annual salary of an after-school youth counselor, housing placement case worker, and employment counselor in New York State is approximately \$20,000, \$40,000 and \$45,000, respectively). Westhab continuously pursues a range of public and private funding to support our work and we will actively seek diverse resources to enhance and sustain our AmeriCorps program. We hope to secure private foundation funding to increase the percentage of non-CNCS funds in future years and eventually sustain the program beyond the funding period. We write over 40 private foundation grants a year to support various activities including service activities and initiatives.

b. Budget Adequacy: Westhab's request of twenty (20) one-year half time AmeriCorps members (totaling 10 Member Service Years) will allow Westhab to achieve our proposed outputs and outcomes. The addition of 12 committed members to our Youth Services, 4 members to our Employment Services, and 4 members to our Housing Services programs will provide a significant increase in productivity and allow Westhab to increase our outputs and outcomes, as previously indicated.

Our Member Costs include an annual Living Allowance of \$4,800 per 1-year half time member, which breaks out to a weekly stipend of \$100 per week for 48 weeks of service for the year. Each member also has a Support Cost of approximately \$528 to cover fringe benefits, which is 11% of the Living Allowance. The budget also includes \$500 to cover the cost of travel for Westhab's volunteer coordinator to attend a NYS corporation-led training; \$2,600 to cover the cost of travel to trainings for AmeriCorps members. Supply costs include \$3,480 for the Afterschool KidzLit program, which

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Westhab will acquire through a grant from the New York City Department of Youth & Community Development; \$480 for AmeriCorps polo shirts with the AmeriCorps logo; and \$1,500 for food and supplies that members will use in the Civic Engagement Program, as previously stated. Consultant Service costs includes \$3,840 in fees paid to state-licensed teachers who will administer Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) pre- and post-testing to children participating in the Literacy Improvement Project (LIP). Member training costs include \$250 for a 5-hour training on the DRA and how to be an effective literacy tutor; \$540 for a training on child abuse and identification; and \$1,000 for a training on Maintaining Professional Boundaries for AmeriCorps Members serving Westhab clients. Evaluation costs include \$579 on the DRA K-3 and 4-8 comprehensive packages and \$2,000 for an external evaluator, Social Policy Innovations, who will provide 50 evaluation hours during the program year. \$2,000 is budgeted to conduct Criminal History Background Checks on AmeriCorps members. Administrative/indirect costs are \$6,485 or 5% of the CNCS request.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

N/A

Continuation Changes

N/A