

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

Twelve partner organizations will leverage the efforts of 16 full-time and 14 part-time AmeriCorps members to improve the economic well-being and security of economically-disadvantaged citizens living in Bangor, a community situated in Penobscot County of Eastern Maine and third-largest city in Maine. At the end of the 3-year (36 month) period, we will have addressed critical basic needs including shelter, access to care, food and more while simultaneously working to increase employment opportunities through job/skill training and education. Our efforts, following the evidence-based approach of Bridges Out of Poverty (Payne, DeVol, Dreussi-Smith, 2001), will establish a model of collaboration to provide the needed resources and assurance to move the economically-disadvantaged out of poverty. This project will focus on two CNCS focus areas including: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY (enhance financial literacy, transition into or remain in safe, healthy, and affordable housing, and improved employability), and HEALTHY FUTURES (access to care and addressing childhood obesity). The CNCS investment of \$276,619 will be matched with \$143,544 projected match committed by our project partners.

## Rationale and Approach

Governor Paul LePage of Maine and City of Bangor Mayor Nelson Durgin have partnered on this application to create the Bangor AmeriCorps program in Eastern Maine. Eastern Maine Community College (EMCC) has been identified as the fiscal agent and manager of the AmeriCorps program entitled, "Strategy to Enhance the Lives of People in Bangor ME." EMCC is a two-year public college specializing in technical, career, and transfer education. Their mission includes the provision of personal attention to each student enrolled in programs or taking courses. Because of their commitment to providing services that address basic needs and training/education, EMCC was felt to be the best organization to directly manage the day-to-day activities and lead the twelve organizational partners that have committed to the program. As one of Maine's public higher education institutions, it is qualified under CNCS guidelines to be the applying agency for this initiative. We will build on the evidence-based model Bridges Out of Poverty which works to ensure that basic living needs are met so that the individual can focus on building their job skills/training/education to become economically self-sufficient. Each of our partners will bring their organization's resources to work towards this goal.

a. NEED. Penobscot County is the third largest county in Maine comprising about 3,556 square miles and having a total population of 153,786 (2011 U.S. Census data). The largest city is Bangor with a

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population of 33,011. Of this number, 17.8% are under the age of 18 and 14.4% are age 65 or older. Bangor is a predominantly Caucasian community with 93.1% White, 1.7% African American, 1.2% Native American, 1.7% Asian, and 1.5% of Hispanic or Latino origin (2% are characterized by 2 or more races). There are 14,377 households in Bangor and median household income is \$37,707 as compared to the state of Maine's average of \$47,898. A total of 90.3% of Bangor residents have attained a high school diploma or higher (age 25+); 28.1% advanced to post-secondary schools and received a bachelor's degree or higher. The Bangor public school enrollment (all schools preK-12) is 3,864 as recorded in October 2012. According to the 2007-2011 State data, 21.8 of Bangor residents are living below the poverty level (this is significantly higher than the 12.8% noted for Maine as a whole. The high number of economically disadvantaged people is evidenced by a Free and Reduced Lunch rate of 51% (average of all schools), with the highest at Downeast Elementary Schools at 94% and the lowest at Mary Snow Elementary at 32%. The unemployment rate for Bangor was 6.6% for December 2012 which is significantly higher than that reported for other major metropolitan areas in the region (Portland, 5.7%; Portsmouth, NH-Maine, 4.7%, Rochester-Dover, NH-Maine, 5.1%). Maine's unemployment rate for the same period was 7.3. These rates include reported seasonal December employment. What is not reported in this data is the high number of underemployed persons living in Bangor. The Bangor Daily News noted in April 2012 that a weak labor market has left half of young college graduates either jobless or underemployed in positions that don't fully use their skills and knowledge. This status is not limited to the young; many formerly employed persons desperate for employment are settling for part-time jobs or jobs well below their skill level in order to meet their basic needs. In addition, the changing job market makes these individuals poor candidates for available, livable wage jobs that require a different set of skills. The last few years have been economically challenging for Bangor and the State. Recent economic downturns have forced businesses to lay off workforce to improve the bottom line, jobs are being mechanized, and historic employers are downsizing or disappearing altogether. Even before the recent recession, the region's economy was well into a transition from traditional manufacturing and natural resource harvesting to a service economy. In early 2011, the Bangor Daily News reported that "a conservative think tank says Maine businesses have been losing more jobs on the average from closures than they created through startups between 1993 and 2007" and "on average, created 29,755 jobs per year from startups, but lost 30,359 jobs from closures." Within the past 3 years, Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor eliminated 100 full-time positions, cutting clinical jobs as well as jobs in other areas of hospital operations. Due to budget revisions, the University of Maine cut 250 faculty, professional and

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hourly positions, equal to a work force reduction in that time period of about 12.5 percent in 3 years. Retail closings include Office Depot, Circuit City, and KB Toys in the Bangor Mall. G.M. Pollack & Sons closed its downtown Bangor jewelry after 37 years in business. The job losses in Bangor have had a great impact on the local community and contribute to homelessness and neighborhood decay. A housing condition survey conducted by the City of Bangor revealed that only 20% of the dwellings in one downtown neighborhood met HUD Housing Quality Standards, 3% appeared to be unfit for human habitation until rehabilitated, and 8% appeared to be beyond economic rehabilitation and have been considered for demolition. Based on a Point-In-Time Survey for the City of Bangor on January 31, 2011, there were 143 people staying in shelters which included 10 families with children. Recently, Maine was ranked worst among U.S. states for earnings growth (3.4%) in a 2011 report from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; Maine typically takes longer than many states to fully emerge from economic slowdowns. Maine saw a 2.8% increase in personal income, while the national average in 2010 was 3% according to this report. In 2010, Maine saw 28,213 households accept public assistance, or 5.2 percent of the state's population. That was an increase from the 4.9 percent of households that collected assistance in 2009. Maine's two congressional districts each support between 64,000 -- 83,000 veterans according to the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of the Actuary, Veteran Population Projection Model (2007). Many of the veterans in Maine District 2 travel to Bangor for services including health care, education, housing assistance, employment counseling/training, and other supportive services to meet their basic needs. Penobscot County is also saddled with a deteriorating housing market. In a report from the Maine State Housing Authority (Homeownership Facts 2010), the median house price was \$125,000 requiring a median income of \$43,337. Approximately 30,612 or 49.2% were unable to afford the median home price (note that an index of less than 1 means the area is generally unaffordable -- Penobscot County is ranked at 1.02). For many, family homes that are older and deteriorating are the only option available for housing; relocating to larger communities would be beyond their financial means. These factors all contribute to Bangor's depressed economy and illustrate the challenges faced by our economically underserved citizens as they struggle to access basic needs and a sound and secure financial future. This project will target economically disadvantaged people, dislocated workers, long-term unemployed individuals who have exhausted or who are nearing exhaustion of Unemployment Benefits, veterans and currently enrolled students who may need further financial assistance in order to complete their programs of studies. It will also address the primary demographic groups that are in need of assistance in order to make the transition to higher skilled, higher wage employment opportunities.

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b. VALUE ADDED. Employing the model of Bridges Out of Poverty, the Bangor AmeriCorps program will consist of twelve community education and service-oriented partners who bring a wide range of services to support a cohort of economically underserved persons through this project. The project partners will employ a coordinated referral process to deliver wrap-around services to the cohort which will include all ages young and old, unemployed, underemployed, students, veterans, and military family members. Information will be shared across service sites to increase effectiveness and impact. To meet the goals of the targeted focus areas of Economic Opportunity and Healthy Futures, our partners will apply this evidence-based model to recruit AmeriCorps members to fill a total of 19.17 MSY slots to mentor, counselor, train, and serve as role models to deliver services identified for their organizational activities.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY: We will recruit and train AmeriCorps members to fill 15.17 MSY slots to deliver services to increase the employment opportunities for economically disadvantaged people living in Bangor. Seven organizations will work closely to deliver a wide range of services to assist targeted individuals to gain self-sufficiency and stability through the attainment of a livable wage jobs while meeting basic needs along the way. This methodology follows the path identified in the Bridges Out of Poverty model. Often poverty is characterized in terms of financial resources -- resources are scarce as individuals do not have livable wage jobs and are thus required to seek local and state support to meet their basic needs. The Bridges Out of Poverty model uses an approach that combines looking for employment with other services such as learning financial literacy (how to appropriately manage the funds as the paychecks start to come in), learning soft skills (applying for a job, building an effective resume), and getting referrals to access housing, healthcare, nutritional food, and education/skills building. The success of this evidence-based model is proven through a direct comparison between the long-term success of those with additional supports and services as opposed to those who do not. There is clear evidence of higher success (employability and long-term self-sufficiency) when additional supports are provided. The seven organizations identified to work with Bangor clients for Economic Opportunity will focus on services that address job counseling/mentoring as well as emotional (counseling to provide encouragement and overcome their fears and stress), cognitive resources (assistance with processing all the information, resources, and training about employer rules), access to support systems, and coping strategies (dealing with the many changes they are experiencing as they work toward self-sufficiency). An overview of each organization and the project services follows:

\* Eastern Maine Community College (5 MSYs) --Five AmeriCorps members will work with students

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and veterans to provide financial literacy training, mentor clients about education and job skills development programs, and serve as service leaders to work with recruited student volunteers who will support these efforts. In addition to financial literacy, EMCC members will work with students to help identify wraparound services as needed, connecting them with community providers to meet their basic needs. Finally, these members will mentor their population to address their educational and skill development needs.

\* Eastern Maine Development Corporation (regional economic and workforce development department) ( 2 MSYs) -- Members will be assigned to work with experienced EMDC Career Advisors on community outreach activities to raise awareness of employment and training resources and services available through the Career Center system. Members will be trained/certified to deliver a series of workshops dealing with work readiness skills such as motivation and challenges to employment, developing an employment plan, effective communication skills, team work, diversity, problem solving and how to get a job, including job search strategies, applications, resumes, understanding wages, benefits, taxes and work related safety.

\*Salvation Army (4 MSYs) -- Two AmeriCorps members will be trained to teach the skills necessary (or refer the clients to appropriate training/education programs) to lead to successful employment, and increase eligibility for higher wage jobs. They will also be trained to provide counseling and mentoring to clients to assist them with meeting their critical needs including shelter, food, and mental health/emotional support needs including housing.

\* Girl Scouts of Maine (1 MSY) -- AmeriCorps members will work with girls ages 5-17 and their families on a financial literacy curriculum from Girl Scouts of the USA and on their leadership skills. The programs would run for 5 weeks or more and be based in a troop structure.

\* Bangor Housing Authority (1 MSY) -- The Bangor Housing Authority plans to enhance efforts for resident self-sufficiency by increasing financial literacy and improving employability. The Housing Authority of the City of Bangor serves qualified individuals through the operation of units of Low Rent Public Housing and provides housing choice vouchers and Moderate Rehabilitation units under the Section 8 Program. The AmeriCorps member will promote asset-building opportunities for families in public housing and Section 8. They will expand awareness HUD's current supportive housing programs and will provide ancillary services to residents by supplementing programs and resources provided by our Resident Service Coordinator (focus on providing on-site skill development including financial literacy, job skills and connecting participants to supports and training that will help them obtain jobs or advance in their current positions).

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\* United Way of Eastern Maine (1 MSY) -- United Way is currently exploring piloting an emergency saving account 1:1 match program that would include training on ways to save, benefits of having an emergency savings accounts, ways to get out of debt, and other financial literacy training. The AmeriCorps member will be assigned to build one-on-one relationships with program participants, communicating regularly about their savings goals and challenges (including ways to get out of debt, ways to save, and how to build emergency savings accounts) and connecting them with other resources in the community. The member would also provide asset mentoring in person and over the phone to clients receiving free tax preparation or participating in our Financial Fitness Events.

\* Community Partnership for Protecting Children (1 MSY) -- One member will deliver strategies aimed at enabling participating residents to increase earned income, making progress toward achieving economic independence and self-sufficiency. They will refer clients to education and vocational programs and trainings, coach participants on job-hunting and interviewing techniques, "soft skills", how to budget, build savings, and clean up credit histories, identify working professionals who could become participants mentors and sources of job leads, work to eliminate barriers to achieve or maintaining economic or employment success including child care and transportation, and provide ongoing facilitated peer support in order to bridge the gap between the individual and service community provider.

HEALTHY FUTURES: The Bridges Out of Poverty model proposes that creating role models and mentoring economically disadvantaged people to help meet their immediate needs while providing support for financial security is a proven approach that breaks the generational or situational history of poverty. Providing access to healthy food choices, mentoring/training on nutritional options (including food preparation), and access to exercise provides the physical tools to help break the pattern of poor health often associated with poverty. Working with clients to address their physical well-being and mobility will provide the necessary structure to impact positively on emotional, mental, and spiritual health as well as providing strategies to increase their ability to cope with their circumstances. This model will have a significant impact on clients efforts to gain a livable wage job and move to self-sufficiency. Five community partners with 4 MSY AmeriCorps slots have proposed to provide services to assure the healthy futures of our clients and their families:

\* Penquis Community Action Program (1 MSY) -- One member will work with the Nutrition Coordinator to provide face-to-face follow-up with families on nutrition concerns identified by the Nutrition Coordinator and Consultant Registered Dietitian. This will involve use of the evidence-based recommendations of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly the American Dietetic

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Association). The member will help design and conduct Nutrition Education Activities for Preschool children and their families enrolled in four Head Start / Child Care centers in Bangor (using the Head Start Nutrition Education Curriculum and additional resources). He/she will work with preschool teachers to incorporate Head Start's evidence-based "I am Moving, I am Learning" strategies into lesson plans (with the aim of increasing physical activity throughout the day). Finally, the member will provide education for Preschool children and their families using materials and curriculum developed for First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative (which is linked directly to the Let's Go! 5-2-1-0 program in Maine).

\* Girls Scouts of Maine (1 MSY): The member will run "mom and me" programs in housing park community centers for girls and their moms/female role models throughout the year. These programs will address exercise and nutrition to provide important training to enhance their basic needs and welfare as individuals work towards self-sufficiency.

\* Food and Medicine (1 MSY) -- One AmeriCorps member will expand our agriculture programs that support low-income families through educational opportunities and increased access to healthy local food. Because one of the risk factors of childhood obesity is a lack of access to fresh foods (including living in designated food deserts), the programs that FAM facilitates are directly related to the "Healthy Futures" goal. The AmeriCorps member will provide education and outreach around the local food access programs including planning and supporting educational programs at Bangor's farmers markets and through the USA program offering educational programs to low-income families, organizing nutrition-related activities for local schools, summer programs and after care groups through our year-round greenhouse, distributing recipes to help educate families about healthy cooking options, and working with UMaine Cooperative Extension, one of our strong partners, to offer educational outreach in local schools.

\* Good Shepherd Food Bank (1 MSY) -- One member will be responsible for supporting the GSF B Programs Team, specifically working with our Cooking Matters and Child Hunger programs in the Bangor area. Over 15 Cooking Matters classes are being coordinated in the Bangor area in 2013; the member will assist with coordination and instruction. Cooking Matters is an evidence-based curriculum which offers healthy cooking classes to low-income families. GSF B offers 5 signature classes which include Cooking Matters for Kids, Cooking Matters for Teens, Cooking Matters for Families, Cooking Matters for Adults, and Cooking Matters for the Child Care Professional. The member will also assist in outreach for the Food Bank's BackPack, School Pantry, Summer Meal, and Kids Café Programs. Each of these programs are specifically targeted to reach children during the

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times that they are most at risk of hunger with nutritious, child friendly foods.

\* The City of Bangor Health and Community Services (BHCS) has not requested an AmeriCorps member to work with existing clients; however, they will closely collaborate with EMCC in overall project management and critical decision-making to assure that the project objectives are met. As the City's public health and community services department, many of the clients served at AmeriCorps partner agencies will be referred for housing and other supportive services (i.e., WIC, nutrition counseling, smoking cessation, etc.). BHCS will also lead the effort to bring other Bangor stakeholders and service organizations together to increase community investment to our program.

\* The University of Maine Bodwell Center for Volunteerism will provide invaluable assistance on this project. They have hosted AmeriCorps members for the past 7 years and have good knowledge of program requirements, typical struggles, and necessary supports. Suggested focus areas will include: What to expect from this program and your AmeriCorps member (host); How to best support your AmeriCorps member (host); Orientation -- What to expect this year, how to prepare yourself, finding resources in the community for yourself and your program (member); Team building activities (member); Mentor Program recruitment, training and administration (member); How to use AmeriCorps as a stepping stone for your future (member); and, Life after AmeriCorps: considering a second year, how to use your educational award, career planning (member). All of these organizations will meet on a monthly basis throughout the three-year project to maintain full collaboration and adherence to program goals and objectives.

c. EVIDENCE-BASED AND MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT. The Bangor AmeriCorps program partners met over the last few months to choose the best evidenced-based approach to model for our program. We have selected the innovative model of Bridges Out of Poverty, a common-sense holistic approach to serving those in need. This model is based on efforts to improve the lives of people in poverty and, by extension, help make sustainable communities in which everyone can do well. Many towns, cities, and counties across America have already begun to employ this evidence-based model in order to make significant changes that come from ideas, techniques, and approaches to change. Important to the Bridges Out of Poverty program are these key points: poverty is relative; poverty occurs in all races and in all countries; economic class is a continuous line, not a clear-cut distinction (crossing into low-income and middle class income homes as well); generational poverty and situational poverty are different (poverty for two generations or longer as opposed to poverty caused by situational, recent circumstance); an individual brings with him or her hidden rules of the class in which he/she was raised. To incorporate this model into the Bangor program, we will develop

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mentoring relationships that support success at school, at work and in the community. The Bridges Out of Poverty model considers the following influential factors and resources: Financial; Support Systems; Emotional; Role Models; Mental; Knowledge of Hidden Rules; Spiritual; Coping Strategies; and, Physical. This model's strategy of addressing the basic needs of individuals including housing, food, access to care, safety and other needs to sustain their well-being must be addressed while, at the same time, providing support and mentoring to help move them to economic self-sufficiency through education, job training, and skills development. When the Bangor AmeriCorps partners met in person to discuss our program design, all felt that this model best described how we wanted to expand and strengthen our services collaboratively to assist our citizens in need. By launching this evidence-based model through our AmeriCorps members, in concert with each partner's professional staff, we will build a program that achieves a "no wrong door" philosophy, and will enhance our efforts to increase successes within the economically underserved population through the application of services and counseling. By the completion of the three-year project, we will have a Maine-based model that will demonstrate our success not only by evidence of increased services, but by the numbers employed and those moving out of general assistance to financial self-sufficiency. Our youth will be better prepared by receiving mentoring early on for education, training, financial literacy, making healthy and other personal choices that will support safe productive lives. As we move through the project period, AmeriCorps partners and members will meet regularly to share results from encounter records and databases, surveys, and anecdotal data. These findings will be used in our evaluation and compiled into an annual report and which will be shared with CNCS and the Maine Commission as well as with our community stakeholders and service agencies.

d. MEMBER RECRUITMENT. The Program Director, Program Manager, and staff at the City of Bangor Health and Community Services will be responsible for recruiting the AmeriCorps members. Members will be recruited through a variety of avenues including: Regional and statewide networks such as VolunteerMaine, Power In Community Alliances, UMA Bangor Cornerstone Program, University of Maine Onward Program, and Maine Centers for Women, Work, and Community; Networks from other Maine-based AmeriCorps Programs; National AmeriCorps database. Further, we will look to general assistance and volunteer clients to determine if eligible candidates are available. In addition, our partners have identified numerous strategies for recruiting AmeriCorps members. Suggestions for recruitment have included accessing graduating Job Corps students, seniors, students from area colleges, under or unemployed persons through the Bangor Career Center, accessing partner organization member databases, faith organizations, substitute teachers, and media releases

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about Bangor's AmeriCorps program.

e. MEMBER TRAINING. Training and orientation will be provided at the start of service. Placement sites will work with EMCC, the Bodwell Center, and the Program Manager to provide all members with orientation to the AmeriCorps program, the host organization and to the local community.

EMCC, as project manager will provide the following orientation and training:

- \* An initial one-day orientation/training at the very beginning of the AmeriCorps member's term of service

- \* Monthly training meetings (performed to reinforce the program requirements and rules about prohibited activities)

- \* An end-of-year meeting to review program activities including successes and ongoing objectives

Training at these sessions will include topics such as: strategies for building community partnerships; asset mapping; member recruitment and management; project management; assessment and evaluation; introduction to service-learning; facilitation, leadership and diversity training; and, other topics that develop as the program progresses. The Program Coordinator will attend Commission and Corporation-sponsored technical assistance meetings including: Annual Grantee Training, Blaine House Conference on Service & Volunteerism, monthly grantee meetings, the National Conference on Service and Volunteering, and the CNCS Financial Management Institute. The Program Coordinator will bring what she has learned back to Bangor and translate this training to the AmeriCorps partner organization staff.

f. MEMBER SUPERVISION. This city-wide initiative will be overseen by the Project Manager, an employee of EMCC; this individual has extensive experience in the management of multi-site projects. In order to effectively manage the project, the Manager will organize monthly meetings of all partner organizations, will perform regular site visits with 2 formal compliance reviews per year at each service site, and will provide on-going support for individual AmeriCorps members as needed. Each AmeriCorps member will also have a service site supervisor who will be responsible for managing the member on a day-to-day basis. The Project Manager will organize and deliver a one-day training session for placement site supervisors at the launch of this program, after which monthly meetings will be convened to discuss progress, barriers, problem-solve, and share tips and successes. Additional support will be offered electronically and by telephone as needed. Finally, ongoing oversight will be enhanced through web-based project management technology. These strategies will allow appropriate supervision to assure that the project is performing to meet its goals, and that issues/problems are resolved in a timely manner.

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g. MEMBER EXPERIENCE. Monthly meetings will be structured to both provide professional development opportunities for the members as well as to allow them the opportunity to share their experiences and expertise with their colleagues and to reflect on those experiences. During these meetings, members will be asked to reflect on their individual roles and organization services, including training provided by the partner organization. This will broaden each member's understanding of the impact of the AmeriCorps program to the Bangor community and a create a deeper understanding about member's roles. These monthly meetings will also provide a forum for AmeriCorps members to connect and learn about other AmeriCorps programs across the county. Connection with community stakeholders and leaders will continue to build on their investment to the program and the Bangor community.

h. VOLUNTEER GENERATION. Recruiting volunteers from the community will be an integral part of the AmeriCorps member's duties. As such, the partner organizations committed to this project have agreed to assist with engaging community members to support the AmeriCorps member efforts to provide project services such as mentoring, house weatherization, community gardening, etc. A particular effort will be made to engage members of the cohort targeted for services as volunteers for the partner organizations in an effort to help develop life and career skills. Training in volunteer recruitment will be provided.

i. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION. The Bangor AmeriCorps partners are committed to promoting AmeriCorps identification through extensive branding. Each partner will add the AmeriCorps name/brand to their organization's web site. The AmeriCorps brand will be incorporated into all program materials including program stationary, application forms, recruitment brochures, on-line and intra-organizational position postings, recruitment posters/flyers/brochures, orientation materials, press releases, and other public information materials (program informational posters, brochures, PowerPoint presentations, etc.). Organizations will be asked to prominently display AmeriCorps-branded materials in their office reception areas and other areas accessed by the public.

### Organizational Capability

EMCC is well-positioned to manage a program of this complexity. As a large community-based education agency, administrative and academic staffs have extensive experience a wide range of programs to enhance and increase services for their students. In recent years, EMCC has successful garnered funding from many sources including federal, state, foundation, and local sources. The management and reporting responsibilities are directed by the individual program/service manager,

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and EMCC administration is routinely appraised of progress and program activities (both problems and successes). EMCC utilizes financial software that tracks revenue and expenditures by funding source, type of transaction, and reporting category. The system is fully integrated, so that transactions originating through purchasing, payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable, and the general journal post to a single general ledger database. EMCC will be responsible for all expenditures made in support of program operations, and will ensure that all expenditures conform to the laws, regulations, OMB Circulars, and other policy statements governing the funding source. EMCC annually engages an independent CPA firm to conduct an entity-wide audit conforming to OMB Circular A-133. Expenditures in support of this program will be displayed separately in the audit report. EMDC also conducts ongoing internal audits of data and performance outcomes, which are compared to plans and key program requirements including adherence to program policies. Trends that need improvement are addressed by corrective action plans.

**ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING, MISSION & HISTORY.** Established in 1966 by the Maine State Legislature, under the authority of the State Board of Education, EMCC was originally known as Eastern Maine Vocational Technical Institute (EMVTI). The college was moved in 1968 from temporary quarters in downtown Bangor to its present campus on Hogan Road. In 1986, the 112th Legislature created a quasi-independent system with a board of trustees to govern all six of Maine's VTIs, and in 1989 another law changed the names of these institutions to more accurately reflect their purpose and activities; EMVTI thus became Eastern Maine Technical College (EMTC). The name of the College changed again in 2003 from "Technical" to "Community" to more accurately reflect its purpose "to provide associate degree, diploma and certificate programs directed at the educational, occupational and technical needs of the State's citizens and the workforce needs of the State's employers... to create an educated, skilled and adaptable labor force which is responsive to the changing needs of the economy of the State and to promote local, regional and statewide economic development." (Public Law, Chapter 431)

**STAFFING AND OVERSIGHT.** Dr. Pamela Proulx-Curry, Academic Dean, is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Academic Affairs Division of EMCC and oversight of its programs, including this AmeriCorps Project. Dr. Proulx-Curry received a B.S. in Chemistry from the University of Maine in 1990 and a Ph.D. in Analytical Chemistry from the University of New Hampshire in 1997. She served as Asst. Professor of Chemistry at the University of Maine at Machias from 1995 to 1999, and as Associate Professor of Chemistry at Unity College from 1999 through 2005. As Executive Director of Wisconsin Campus Compact from 2006 to 2011, Dr. Proulx-Curry oversaw a state-wide,

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35 member AmeriCorps\*VISTA program as well as a 600- member EAP AmeriCorps program that operated in 9 mid-western states (M3C Fellows Program). Erin Vinson will serve as coordinator of the project and oversee its day-to-day operations including the monitoring of all service sites. Erin Vinson began her academic career after serving as a volunteer for Conservation Volunteers of Australia (formerly Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers). She received two Bachelor of Science degrees (Ecology and Biology) in 2003 at the University of Georgia, following which she completed a Master of Arts degree in Teaching (secondary science) in 2006 at UNC-Wilmington. Erin has worked in North Carolina as a high school environmental science teacher, in Washington DC as Program Coordinator for the Ecological Society of America's SEEDS (Strategies for Ecology Education Diversity and Sustainability) program, where she coordinated over 50 SEEDS chapters at various colleges and universities. More recently she worked at the State University of New York's College of Environmental Science and Forestry's (SUNY ESF) field station, the Adirondack Ecological Center, as an environmental educator. Erin currently serves as program coordinator for the following EMCC programs: Concurrent Enrollment, General Technology, and Trade and Technical Occupations. Her appointment is currently an academic year appointment, but will expand to full-time in order to coordinate this project.

Service sites have been selected based on the organization's ability to provide local supervision and oversight of the program. To be eligible to apply and participate in the project, each site has agreed to minimally meet the following requirements:

1. Agree to support an AmeriCorps member
2. Identify a supervisor who will be assigned at least 10% time to supervise the AmeriCorps member
3. Identify a project into which the member could naturally be integrated, and describe a plan for how the member will complete their term of service (i.e., the type of service, and what community and faith-based organizations they will partner with) Service Site Supervisors will:

- \* Serve as liaison between their organization and EMCC
- \* Recruit and identify potential AmeriCorps members with guidance from EMCC
- \* Provide access to transportation to/from at least one annual state/regional training event
- \* Provide AmeriCorps member(s) with appropriate resources to ensure successful completion of their assignment, including access to a computer with internet, printer, email, telephone, and fax machine
- \* Oversee AmeriCorps members as they work with community partners to identify community needs that relate to the goals and objectives of the project
- \* Monitor, verify, and compile AmeriCorps member activities through timesheets, evaluations, annual

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reports and other documents deemed as necessary

\* Abide by all terms and conditions set forth by CNCS as well as policies and procedures of the Project.

A memorandum of agreement will be executed between service site partners and EMCC. In recognition of the challenges associated with operating a multi-site project, the EMCC program manager will communicate via conference calls and invest considerable time/effort in web-based project management and reporting using OnCorps online management software. The program will use this technology to facilitate information dissemination (program training materials, operations manuals, and other information using PowerPoint, streaming audio/video, Adobe files, etc.) and information collection.

SUSTAINABILITY. The AmeriCorps member tasked with recruiting and organizing student members will assist the Program Coordinator in developing tools and infrastructure for an on-going service-learning/community service program which will eventually be staffed by EMCC personnel and work-study students. As this project progresses, the partner organizations will meet on a regular basis for project updates, organizational activities, and to discuss successes and problems. These meetings will assure that activities adhere to project goals and will foster dialogs around sustainability beyond the initial project period of three years. Our goal will be to move the AmeriCorps member roles and/or responsibilities (and potentially the member) into permanent positions within each partner organization, either as a permanent volunteer position or a paid employee. We will also search aggressively for other funding sources to supplement funding from AmeriCorps and assure that program activities continue in the Bangor community. EMCC and the partner organizations have extensive experience in funds and grants development, and will collaborate to pool these resources to benefit this program. EMCC maintains a fully-staffed development office that will work closely with the Program Director and Manager to identify fundraising strategies. Our funds development activities will include an investigation of all potential sources including local, private, public, state, and federal funds. In addition to the commitment of our partners, the Bangor community is committed to help sustain this program beyond the funding period. The City of Bangor has been a full participant in the development of this project and the post-award administration of all activities. Their contact with community stakeholders including public and private businesses, education institutions, service organizations and other community members will assure that every effort is made to engage the Bangor community in our efforts. We feel confident that the wide representation of partners and community stakeholders already invested in this program will enhance our efforts for long-term sustainability.

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c. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY. The Program Manager will work closely with each partner organization to monitor the program and partner sites for compliance to our objectives and goals. Through the regularly scheduled monthly meetings, the partners will provide updates on the status of their activities including problems encountered and successes. During these sessions, EMCC will work closely with the City of Bangor Health and Community Services staff and the University of Maine Bodwell Center for Volunteerism to review program expectations as well as prohibited activities. These sessions provide the format to for open dialogs to enhance program activities. Each partner/host site will be directly connected through an electronic program management system, and data collected will be review by the Program Manager through two annually scheduled on-site visits. In addition to the annual report prepared for local, state, and national partners, each partner will be asked to provide a brief summary of activities to the Program Manager on a quarterly basis. Those organizations struggling to meet their goals will be worked with on a one-on-one basis by the Program Director and Manager to bring them back to compliance. Should a partner fail to meet expectations, their continued participation will be considered prior to the start of following program years. Through interventions scheduled consistently throughout each program year, we will maintain a productive and successful AmeriCorps program model that could be adopted by other communities in Maine and nationally.

### **Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy**

COST EFFECTIVENESS. EMCC supports its operations through an annual state appropriation, collection of tuition and fees, and receipt of grants and gifts from federal and state agencies as well as private foundations and individual donors. During the past two years, EMCC has hosted a VISTA member on campus who has been working with rural high schools in the region to improve college readiness and access for low-income, rural students. This VISTA member is provided through a sub-grant from Maine Campus Compact, which requires a \$5,000 cash match. EMCC also provides the VISTA with lodging and a meal plan in addition to covering all work-related expenses.

The proposed AmeriCorps project represents approximately 1.3% of the institution's annual operating budget. EMCC plans to partner with eleven other organizations in the Bangor area. Together all partners (including EMCC) have pledged a total of \$143,544 in matching funds (34% of the project cost). The match is comprised of both cash (from salary and benefits for service-site supervisors, project indirect costs provided by EMCC, and travel costs associated with the AmeriCorps members work), and in-kind contributions such as office space and equipment. Also, recruitment of additional volunteers from the community will be a major goal of the project, as will the identification and

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recruitment of additional organizational partners. The project manager will also be actively engaged in identifying and securing further sources of funding through grants and gifts. The project will help to create a network between the engaged partners that will help to maximize the support and services available to the project's target population and minimizing the likelihood of individuals slipping through the safety net. Additionally the increased collaboration between non-profit organizations and social service providers in the community will help to minimize duplication of services, thus reducing costs associated with delivery of services.

**BUDGET ADEQUACY.** The Budget will support a significant portion of the costs associated with the project. Member living allowances, FICA, health insurance costs, and criminal background checks are all included. A significant portion of the requested funding will be applied to staff and member training. The investment in staff training will help to insure that the program is effectively and efficiently managed and in compliance with all federal regulations. The investment in member training will help to insure that they can effectively carry out their assigned duties and that they will end their year of service with an expanded skill set and improved prospects for gainful employment. The budget also includes a portion of the project manager's salary and benefits. The individual we have identified to manage the project is currently employed only during the academic year. The grant will help to defray some of the added costs of bringing her on year round. We have also provided funding for educational/training supplies, consultants to support the training program, and AmeriCorps gear to help disseminate information about the Corporation and its programs. Other costs of running the program will be provided by cash and in-kind matching contributions from the partnering organizations.

### **Evaluation Summary or Plan**

This new AmeriCorps program will be evaluated on an ongoing basis, with partner organizations meeting on a monthly basis to compare data, program progress, and trouble-shoot problems. In addition, the program manager will perform site visits at each partner/member location to review first-hand the program materials, data collection, client encounter notes, and other information that will allow an assessment of the member's activities.

The cohort receiving project services will be compared against a reference group of individuals who are not receiving the same wrap-around services. The following data will be collected on each program participant before delivery of services and annually thereafter for the duration of the project:

\* Age

\* Race/ethnicity

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- \* Sex
- \* Education level
- \* Employment history
- \* Housing status
- \* Economic status/financial literacy
- \* Health/nutritional status & level of access to healthy/nutritious food

We will seek assistance from the United Way in the development of data gathering instruments and a data gathering plan. We will seek assistance from statisticians on the EMCC faculty for data analysis. Program participants will be surveyed annually to determine their satisfaction with the services provided. Service site supervisors and AmeriCorps members will be surveyed annually to determine their satisfaction with support provided by the program manager. The results of these surveys will be analyzed and used for continuous program improvement.

### **Amendment Justification**

N/A

### **Clarification Summary**

N/A

### **Continuation Changes**

N/A